

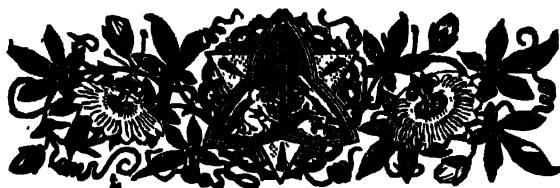
POPULAR TALES FOR CHILDREN.

BY
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WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS.

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The Fir Tree.



IN a lovely forest nook, warmed by the sun and fanned by the soft air, stood a dainty little fir tree ; taller and older play-fellows grew round it, pines as well as firs. One thought filled its whole heart ; the eager longing to grow taller :

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It took no heed of the pleasant sunshine and fresh air, nor of the little peasant children playing and prattling round it when they came out to look for wild strawberries and raspberries. Very often they gathered a whole basketful, and then they would sit down to thread strawberries on a straw, and say, "What a dear little tiny tree this one is!" and that made the fir tree very angry. The next year it was taller by one ring, and the year after that it reached another ring, for you can always tell by the number of rings on a fir tree how many years it has lived.

"Oh! if I were only a tall tree like the others," sighed the little fir tree; "then I could spread out my branches far and wide, and look out from my crest into the wide world. The birds would build their nests in my branches, and when the wind blew I could bow as grandly as the others yonder!"

It found no pleasure in the sunshine, or the birds, or the rosy clouds that sailed above it at dawn or sunset. Often, when the winter came, and the snow lay white and glittering all around, a hare would come leaping by and spring right over the little tree, to its great vexation. But two winters passed away, and in the third the tree was so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it. "Oh! to grow, and grow, and be old and tall! That is the one thing worth caring for in this world," thought the fir tree. In the autumn woodcutters came and felled some of the tallest trees. This happened every year, and the young fir tree, which was quite grown up now, shuddered to see the tall, stately trees fall crashing to the ground; their branches were stripped off, and they looked meagre, wan, and bare, you could scarcely know them again. After that, they were placed on wagons and drawn by horses out of the wood. Whither were

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they going? What fate lay before them? In the spring, when the swallows and storks came, the fir tree asked them, "Don't you know whither they have been taken? Have you not met them?"

The swallows knew nothing at all, but the stork considered awhile, nodded his head, and said, "I believe I have. As I was flying home from Egypt I met many new ships, and on the ships were stately masts; I think those were they; they smelt like fir trees."

"Oh, if I were only tall enough to sail across the sea! By the way, what sort of a thing is the sea? What does it look like?" "That would take much too long to explain," said the stork; and with that he flew away. "Rejoice in your youth!" said the sunbeams; "rejoice in your fresh growth, and the young life within you."

And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew wept tears over it; but the fir tree could not understand all that. When it drew near Christmas, quite young trees were felled; trees not even as tall or as old as this fir tree, who knew no rest nor peace, but was always longing to be away. These young trees, and they were the very finest ones, kept on all their branches; they too were placed on wagons and drawn by horses out of the wood.

"Where do they go to?" asked the fir tree. "They are no taller than I; indeed, one of them was much smaller! Why do they keep on all their branches? Whither are they led away?"

"We know, we know," twittered the sparrows; "we have looked in at the windows of the town down yonder. We know where they go to. Oh! they attain to the greatest honour and splendour you can imagine! We have looked through the windows, and seen them planted in the middle of the warm room and decked

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out with the loveliest things: gilt apples, sweet cakes playthings, and hundreds of lighted tapers."

"And then?" asked the fir tree, trembling in all its branches; "and then? What happens then?"

"We did not see any more. It was beyond compare!"

"Suppose I too am destined to tread this glorious path!" exulted the fir tree. "That is even better than crossing the sea. I ache with very longing! If it were only Christmas! If I were only in the wagon—or in the warm room with all the pomp and splendour! And then——? Why, then comes something better and higher still, or else why do they decorate us so richly? It must be something greater and more splendid—but what? Ah, I long, and pine! I cannot tell how I feel."

"Be happy with us," said the air and sunshine; "rejoice in your fresh youth, under the free heaven."

But the fir tree would not rejoice; it grew and grew; winter and summer through it stood there dark-green, tall, and stately; the people who saw it, said, "That is a fine tree." And at Christmas-time it was the very first to be felled. The axe struck deep through bark and pith, the tree fell with a sigh to the earth; it felt a sharp pain and faintness; it could not think about splendour; it was sad at having to leave its home, and the spot where it had grown up; it knew very well that it would never see its dear old companions again, nor the little bushes and flowers; perhaps not even the birds. The parting was by no means joyous. The tree did not recover itself till it was unloaded in a yard with several others, and heard a man say, "This is a splendid one! We shall not want any others."

Then came up two servants in smart liveries and carried the tree into a large and beautiful drawing-room. Pictures

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were hung round the walls, and near the stove stood two large Chinese vases, with lions on the lids: there were rocking-chairs, and silk-covered sofas near large tables covered with picture-books and playthings worth a hundred times a hundred dollars, at least that was what the children said. The fir tree was placed in a large tub filled with sand; but no one could tell that it was a tub, because it was covered with fine green cloth, and stood on a rich, bright-coloured carpet. Oh! how the tree trembled! What would happen next? The servants and the young ladies helped to decorate it. Along its branches they hung little nets cut out of coloured paper and filled with sugar-plums; gilded apples and nuts hung down as if they were growing; and hundreds of red, and blue, and white tapers were fastened firmly to the branches. Dolls, that looked like real men and women—the fir tree had never seen such things before—swung among the leaves, and high above, on the top of the tree, was placed a golden star. It was splendid! indescribably splendid!

"To-night," they said, "to-night it will be lighted up."

"Oh," thought the tree, "if it were only night! If the tapers were but lighted! And what will happen then? I wonder whether the trees will come out of the wood to look at me? or the sparrows fly against the window-panes? Or shall I stand here in splendour winter and summer through?"

It did not guess badly, but it had a downright bark-ache from sheer longing; and bark-ache for a tree is just as bad as headache is for us. Now the tapers were lighted. What a glitter, and a blaze! The tree trembled so in all its branches that one of the tapers caught a green twig, and it was actually singed. "Mercy on us!" cried the young ladies, and put it out directly. After

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that the tree dared not even shiver. It gave it such a fright! It was afraid of losing any of its finery, and was quite dazzled by the glitter. And now two folding-doors were thrown open, and a crowd of children rushed in as if they wanted to upset the whole affair; the elder folk followed more deliberately. The children stood quite silent; but only for one moment, then they shouted with delight till the room rang again; they danced round the tree, and one present after another was plucked off.

"What are they doing?" thought the tree. "What is going to happen?" The tapers burned down to the branches, and as each one burned down it was put out. Then the children had permission to strip the tree. Now they rushed upon it till it creaked in every branch! If it had not been fastened by the gold star to the ceiling it must have been knocked down. The children danced about with their beautiful playthings. Nobody looked at the tree except the old nurse, who came and peered among the branches, but that was only to see if a fig or an apple had been forgotten.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, and they drew a plump little man towards the tree; he sat down right under the branches. "Now we are out in the green-wood!" he said; "and the tree may have the privilege of listening. But I shall only tell one tale. Shall it be Ivede-Avede, or Humpty-Dumpty who fell down-stairs, and yet came to honour and glory and married the Princess?"

"Ivede-Avede!" shouted some of the children; "Humpty-Dumpty!" cried the others, and there was a fine racket. The fir tree stood perfectly still. "Am not I to be in it?" it thought; "shall not I have something to do in it?" But it *had* been in it, and played out all the part set down for it.

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The man told about Humpty-Dumpty who fell down-stairs, and yet came to honour and glory and married the Princess. The children clapped their hands and cried, "Go on, go on!" They wanted the story of Ivede-Avede as well; but they only got Humpty-Dumpty. The fir tree kept very silent; never had the birds in the wood told such a tale as that. "Humpty-Dumpty fell down-stairs, and yet he married the Princess. Yes; that's the way things go on in the world," thought the fir tree; and it was sure it must be true, because it was such a respectable man who told it. "Yes! who can tell? Perhaps I shall fall down-stairs and marry a Princess." And it looked forward with delight to being adorned again the next day with lights and playthings, gold and fruits.

"I will not tremble to-morrow," it thought. "I will thoroughly enjoy all my splendour. I shall hear again the tale of Humpty-Dumpty, and perhaps Ivede-Avede as well." And the tree stood silent and thoughtful the whole night through. In the morning the servant men came in with the housemaid.

"Now they are going to dress me up again," thought the tree. But they dragged it out of the room and up the stairs to the garret, and there they put it in a dark corner where no ray of daylight fell.

"What is the meaning of this?" thought the tree. "Whatever am I to do here? What can I possibly hear now?" It leaned against the wall and thought. And it had plenty of time for thinking, for days and nights passed by. Nobody came upstairs, and when some one did come at last, it was only to put some large boxes in the corner. The tree was now completely hidden; it was enough to make one think it was quite forgotten. "It is winter out of doors now," thought the

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tree; "the ground is hard and I cannot be planted yet. Perhaps I am kept safe here to wait for the spring. How considerate that is! How kind people are to me! If it were only not quite so dark and lonely up here. Not even a little hare! How pretty it was out yonder in the wood, when the snow lay round and the hare leapt by; yes, even when it leapt over me—though I could not bear it then. It certainly is dreadfully dull up here."

"Piep! piep!" squeaked a little mouse stealing out; and then came another little one. They sniffed round the fir-tree and slipped in among the branches.

"Its fearfully cold," said the little mouse, "or else it would be rather comfortable here. Don't you think so, you old fir-tree?"

"I am not at all old," said the fir-tree; "there are many firs much older than I."

"Where do you come from?" asked the mice; "and what can you tell us?" They were dreadfully inquisitive. "Can you tell us about the most beautiful place in the world? Have you ever been there? Have you been in the pantry, where the cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from the ceiling? Where one dances on tallow candles, where one goes in lean and comes out fat?"

"I don't know that place," said the tree. "But I know the wood where the sun shines and the birds sing." And then it told them all about its youth, and the little mice had never heard anything like it before. They listened eagerly, and said, "Dear me! What a number of things you have seen! How fortunate you must have been!"

"I?" said the fir tree, and it began to think over what it had just been telling them. "Well—yes; it was, on the whole, a happy time. But then it told them about

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the Christmas-eve when it had been dressed out with cakes and lighted tapers."

"Oh!" cried the little mice, "what a happy life you have had, you old fir-tree!"

"I'm not at all old," said the fir-tree. "I only came out of the wood this winter. I'm a little backward in my growth, perhaps."

"How nicely you tell tales!" said the little mice. And the next night they came with four other mice, to hear what the fir-tree had to say. The more it told them, the more clearly everything came back to it. "Yes," it thought, "they were happy days, after all! But they may come again. Humpty-Dumpty fell down stairs, and yet he married the princess; perhaps I shall marry a princess, too!" And it thought of a lovely little birch-tree out in the woods, for the birch-tree was a real and beautiful princess in the eyes of the fir-tree.

"Who is Humpty-Dumpty?" asked the mice. And then the fir-tree told them the whole story; it could recollect every word of it, and the little mice were ready to jump up to the top of the tree for joy. The following night a great many more mice came, and on Sunday two rats were present, but they did not think the story at all pretty, and that vexed the little mice, and they cared less about listening than they had done before.

"Do you only know one story?" asked the rats. "Only that one," said the fir-tree; "I heard that on the happiest evening of my life. I never thought then how happy I was."

"It is a most contemptible story. Don't you know any about bacon or tallow candles? No store-room story?" "No," said the tree. "Then we have had enough, thank you," said the rats, and they went back to their own friends.

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The little mice, too, stayed away at last ; and the tree sighed. " It was really very nice when they sat round me, those lively little mice, and listened while I told them tales. But that is over now ! Well, I must look forward to the pleasure I shall have when I am fetched away from here." Now, when did that happen ? Why, it was one morning, when the people came up-stairs to set the garret to rights ; they moved away the boxes, and drew out the fir-tree, which they threw rather roughly to the ground. A servant came up, then, and dragged it to the stair-case, where it was all clear daylight. " Now my life will begin again ! " thought the tree. It felt the soft air, and the first sunbeams, and now it was out of doors in a court-yard. All this happened so quickly, that the tree had no time to think of itself ; besides, there was so much to look at all round-it. The yard was close to a garden, where everything was in full bloom ; roses hung fresh and fragrant over the trellis, the lime trees were in blossom, and the swallows were flying about and saying, " Qui-viet-qui-viet ! my husband is come home ! " but they did not mean the fir-tree. " Now I begin to breathe again ! " thought the tree, and spread out its branches far and wide ; but, alas ! they were all dry and yellow, and it was lying in a corner among weeds and nettles. The gold-tinsel star was still on the topmost bough, and it glittered in the sunshine.

In the yard some children were playing merrily ; some of those very children who had danced round the tree on Christmas eve, and thought it so beautiful. One of the youngest ran up to it and tore off the gold star. " Look what was left on the ugly old fir-tree ? " he cried, and trod upon the branches till they cracked again under his boots. And the tree looked at all the freshness and

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beauty of the flower garden, and then looked at itself, and wished it were back again in the dark garret. It thought of its joyous youth, of the brilliant Christmas night, and of the little mice who had listened so eagerly to the story of Humpty-Dumpty.

"Too late! too late!" said the old tree. "If I had only been happy while I could! Too late! too late!"

Then the servant came and chopped the tree into little pieces, there was a whole bundle of them, and they flamed out brightly under the large copper in the brew-house; the branches sighed deeply, and every sigh rang out like a shot, so that the children left their play and came to sit down before the fire, looking into it, and crying out "Puff! puff!" But at every crack, which was a deep sigh, the tree thought of a summer's day in the woods, or of a winter night when the stars were shining; it thought of the Christmas-eve, and the story of Humpty-Dumpty, the only one it had heard, or could tell again—and by that time the tree was burned away.

The children played on in the garden, and the youngest wore on his breast the gold star which the tree had worn on the happiest evening of its life. Now that had passed away—and the tree had passed away—and the story was ended—ended and gone—and that's the way with all stories.



The Swineherd.



HERE was once a poor prince; he had a kingdom, but it was a very little one. Still it was large enough for him to marry upon, and married he was determined to be.

Now perhaps it was rather bold of him to venture to say to the emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But he did venture, for his name was known far and wide, and there were hundreds of princesses who would gladly have said "yes;" the question was what would *she* say?

Well, we shall see.

On the grave of the prince's father grew a rose-tree—a very lovely rose-tree. It only bloomed once in every five years, and then it bore only one rose—but what a rose! It smelt so sweet that any one who smelt it forgot all his care and sorrow. And the prince had a nightingale who could sing as if all the beautiful melodies in the world were hidden in her little throat. The princess was to have the rose and the nightingale, so they were both packed in silver cases and sent to her.

The emperor had them brought before him into the throne room, where the princess was playing at paying visits with her maids of honour; and as soon as she saw the cases with the presents she clapped her hands for joy.

"If it is only a little pussy cat!" she said; but they brought out the rose-tree with its glorious rose.

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"Oh, how prettily it is made!" cried the maids of honour.

"It is more than pretty, it is charming," said the emperor.

But the princess felt it and was ready to cry.

"Fie! papa," she cried; "why it is not artificial at all—it is a natural one!"

"Fie!" cried the court ladies; "it is a natural one!"

"Let us see what is in the other case before we lose our tempers," said the emperor, and out came the nightingale who sang so sweetly that for a moment no one could think of anything to say against it.

"Superbe-charmant!" said the court ladies, for they all spoke French, "one worse than the other."

"How the bird reminds me of the snuff box of Her Imperial Highness the late lamented empress!" said an old nobleman; "the same tone—the same phrasing!"

"Yes!" said the emperor, and began to cry like a child.

"Now I do hope *that's* not a natural one!" said the princess.

"Yes, it is," said the messenger who had brought it.

"Then let it fly!" said the princess, and she would not hear of the prince's coming.

He, however, was not to be frightened; he stained his face a deep brown, pulled his cap over his eyes, and knocked at the door. "Good morning, emperor," he said. "Can I be taken on in your employment at the palace?"

"Perhaps," said the emperor; "but there are so many who come to me for a place, that I do not know if I can manage it. Stay! it just occurs to me that I want some one to keep the pigs—we have an immense number of pigs here."

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So the prince was appointed swineherd to His Imperial Majesty. He was given a wretched little room close to the pigsties, and there he had to stay; all day long, however, he was working hard, and by nightfall he had made a pretty little pot with bells all round it, and when the pot boiled the bells rang out the old tune—

“Ah! my dearest Augustine,
All is gone by.”

But the great beauty of it was, that when you held your finger in the steam from the pot, you could smell in a moment every dinner that was being cooked in every house in the town. That was certainly a very different thing from the rose.

Now the princess came walking by one day, with all her maids of honour, and when she heard the tune she stood still and looked quite delighted; for she could play “Dearest Augustine” herself; it was the only tune she knew, but she could play that with one finger.

“Why that is the air I play!” she cried. “He must be a gentlemanly swineherd! Listen: you go down to him and ask him what the instrument costs.”

And one of the court ladies was obliged to go down, but first she put on wooden clogs.

“What do you want for that pot?” said the maid of honour.

“I want ten kisses from the princess,” answered the swineherd.

“Goodness gracious!” said the maid of honour.

“And I won’t take less,” said the swineherd.

“Well, what did he say?” asked the princess.

“I really dare not tell you,” said the maid of honour.

“You can whisper it in my ear, He is very rude,” exclaimed the princess, and she walked on.

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But when she had gone a little way farther the bells rang out so sweetly—

“Ah ! my dearest Augustine,
All is gone by—gone by—gone by.”

“Now, listen,” said the princess, “ask him if he will take ten kisses from my maids of honour.”

“No, thank you,” said the swineherd; “ten kisses from the princess, or I keep my pot.”

“How tiresome it is !” said the princess. “Well, you must all stand round me, so that no one can see.”

The court ladies made a circle round them, spreading out their dresses, and then the swineherd got his ten kisses and the princess got her pot.

And highly delighted she was with it ! All that night, and all the next day, the pot was kept boiling ; there was not a single house in the whole town where they did not know what was being cooked for dinner, from the Lord Chamberlain’s down to the shoemaker’s. The court ladies danced for joy, and clapped their hands.

“We know who is going to have soup and pancakes, and who is going to have porridge and cutlets. Is not it interesting ?”

“Oh very !” exclaimed the first lady-in-waiting.

“Yes, but keep quiet about it, for I am the emperor’s daughter.”

“Certainly, certainly ; of course we shall.”

The swineherd, that is to say, the prince—though, for all they knew, he was nothing but a swineherd—let no day go by without making something, and once he made a rattle, which, when it was sprung, played all the waltzes, jigs, and polkas that have been heard since the creation.

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"Really that is *superbe*!" said the princess. "I never heard a finer composition. Listen: you go down to him and ask what the instrument costs. Mind, I shall not kiss him again."

"He wants a hundred kisses from the princess," said the maid of honour, who had gone to inquire.

"I think he is out of his mind," said the princess, and she walked on. But when she had gone a little way farther she stood still. "One must encourage the fine arts," she said "I am the emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall have ten kisses, as before; he can take the rest from my maids of honour."

"Oh! but we would rather not," said the court ladies.

"Nonsense!" cried the princess. "If I can kiss him surely you can. Remember I find you board and wages." And they were obliged to go down to him again. "One hundred kisses from the princess," he said, "or each keeps his own."

"Stand round us, then," said the princess. So the maids of honour stood round them, and the swineherd kissed the princess.

"What is all that uproar down by the pigsties?" said the emperor, who was standing on the balcony. He rubbed his eyes, and put on his spectacles. "Why, I declare, it is the maids of honour at their tricks. I shall certainly have to go down to them." He slipped off his house shoes—they were really shoes, but he had trodden them down at heel, and made them into slippers.

Fire and fury! what a hurry he was in!

As soon as he reached the yard he walked very softly and the maids of honour were so busy counting the kisses and seeing fair play that they never noticed the emperor. He raised himself on tiptoe.

"What is that?" he cried, when he saw the kissing,



"The maids of honour stood round."

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and he let fly one of his slippers on their heads, just as the swineherd was having the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Be off!" said the emperor, for he was angry. And the princess and the swineherd were both driven out of his kingdom.

There she stood and cried, and the rain streamed down, and the swineherd scolded. "Oh! miserable me!" cried the princess, "if I had only accepted the handsome prince! Ah! how unhappy I am!"

The swineherd stepped behind a tree, wiped off the brown stain from his face, cast away his mean clothing, and stepped forward in his royal robes, so handsome that the princess was fain to curtsy low before him. "I have got to this point," he said. "I despise you. You refused an honourable prince; you were not capable of understanding the rose or the nightingale; but you could kiss a swineherd for a toy, and this is what you get by it." Then he went into his kingdom, and shut the door in her face. So she was left standing outside to sing—

"Ah! my dearest Augustine,
All is gone by."

The Elf of the Roses.



IN the midst of a garden stood a rose-bush covered with roses, and in one of the roses, the most beautiful of all, there lived an Elf. He was so very tiny that no mortal eye could see him, and he had a sleeping-room behind every rose leaf. He was as beautifully made, and as

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fair as only a fairy can be, and his wings fell down from his shoulders to his feet. Ah! what fragrance breathed from his home; how soft and sweet were the walls! They were all built of pale pink rose leaves. All the day long he basked in the warm sunshine; flew from flower to flower, or danced on the wings of flying butterflies. He measured how many steps he must take to walk over all the roads and by-ways on a single leaf



on the linden tree. For what we call the leaf's veins, he took for high roads and winding paths, and very long he found them. Before he had finished his journey the sun set; he had begun a little too late.

It grew very cold; the dew fell, and the wind was rising: the best thing left for him to do was to hasten homeward. He made all the haste he could, but his roses had closed for the night; not a single flower was open. The poor little Elf was terribly frightened; he

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had never been out by night before, but had always slept sweetly among the soft, warm rose leaves. Certainly this night would be the death of him! At the other end of the garden he knew there was an arbour overgrown with beautiful honeysuckles, the flowers looked just like great painted horns, and he made up his mind to alight on one of them and sleep till morning. He flew towards them. Hush! in the arbour were two mortals, a handsome young man and a lovely girl. They were sitting close together, and wishing they need never part. They loved each other, ah! far better than the best child can love its father and mother.

"Yet we must part!" said the young man. "Your brother hates us, and that is why he is sending me on this business across seas and over mountains. Farewell, my sweet betrothed, for so in very truth you are."

Then they kissed each other and the young girl gave him a rose. But before she gave it, she kissed it so passionately that the flower opened its petals, and in flew the little Elf, and leaned his weary head against the fragrant walls. He heard how from the quivering leaves was still re-echoing "farewell! farewell!" And then he felt that the rose was laid against the young man's heart. Ah! how the heart was beating. The little Elf could not sleep for its wild throbbing. But the rose was not left there undisturbed. The youth took it from its resting place, and as he wandered alone through the dark, dark forest, he kissed it so often and so passionately that the tiny Elf was half stifled. He could feel the hot lips through the trembling leaves, and the rose opened wide, as if under the burning noonday sun. Then came up another man, sullen and evil of heart; it was the fair girl's wicked brother. He drew out a sharp knife, and, while the lover kissed the rose, he stabbed him to the

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heart, cut off his head, and buried head and body in the soft earth under the linden tree.

"Now he is made away with," thought the wicked brother. "He can never return, and he will be forgotten. He was to take a long journey over sea and mountain where lives are easily lost, and he has lost *his* life. He can never return, and my sister dares not ask questions of me." Then he scraped with his feet the withered leaves over the loose earth, and went home again through the gloomy night. But he did not go alone, as he thought, for the Elf was his companion. The little creature sat in a dry, rolled-up leaf that had fallen from the linden tree into the murderer's hair as he dug the grave. His hat was over the leaf so that all was dark, and the Elf trembled with rage and horror at the evil deed.

In the early dawn the wicked man reached his home; he took off his hat and went into his sister's bedroom. There lay the lovely, blooming maiden, dreaming of him whom she loved with all her heart, and who, as she thought, was wandering far away over seas and mountains. The wicked brother leaned over her and laughed an evil laugh, like the laugh of a fiend. Then the withered leaf fell from his hair on to the coverlet, but he did not notice it, and went out to sleep a little before the sun rose. The Elf stole out of the fallen leaf, placed himself in the maiden's ear, and told her in a dream of the terrible murder, describing the place where her lover lay slain by her brother's hand, and whispering of the blossoming linden over-head. "Lest you should think it is all a dream," he said, "you will find upon your bed a withered leaf." And when she woke there lay the leaf!

Oh! what bitter tears she shed. Her window stood
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open all day long. The Elf could easily have flown to his roses and the other flowers in the garden, but he could not find it in his heart to leave the grief-stricken maiden. In the window stood a little tree of monthly roses ; the Elf seated himself in one of them and watched the heart-broken girl. Her brother often came into her room, and in spite of his evil deed looked bold and gay ; but she dared not say a word of her sorrow.

As soon as night came on, she stole out of the house, went through the forest to the place where the linden tree stood ; swept away the leaves, removed the earth, and found the body of the murdered youth. Oh ! how she wept, and prayed to God that she too might die soon. She would gladly have carried the body home, but that she could not do ; so she took the pale head, with its closed eyes, kissed the cold lips, and shook the earth out of the beautiful hair. " I will keep this," she said. And when she had replaced the earth and leaves over the body, she took the head, and a little spray of jasmine that was growing close by, and carried them to her home. When she reached her own room, she took the largest flower-pot she could find, placed within it the beloved head, covered it with earth, and planted above it the jasmine spray.

" Farewell, farewell ! " whispered the little Elf, for he could not bear the sight of all this sorrow. He flew back to his roses in the garden, but they were all faded, and only pale, dead leaves hung on the green haws. " Oh, how quickly the good and beautiful pass away ! " sighed the Elf. At last he found another rose, which he chose for his home, and in its delicate, fragrant leaves he could abide and dwell.

Every morning he flew to the poor girl's window ; she was always standing weeping by the flower-pot. Her

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bitter tears fell on the slip of jasmine, and while she grew paler and paler day by day, the plant grew fresher and greener; one shoot after another sprang forth; tiny white buds came out and blossomed, and she kissed them all. But the wicked brother spoke harshly to her, asking her if she had lost her senses; he could not bear to see her, nor could he understand why she was for ever weeping by the flower-pot. He knew not of the closed eyes slumbering there, nor of the red lips which had mingled with the dust. One day the maiden bowed her head upon the flower-pot, and the Elf of the roses found her sleeping. He stole softly into her ear to whisper stories of the twilight in the grove, of the fragrance of the roses, and of the loves of the elves. And she dreamed a strange, sweet dream, and as she dreamed her spirit passed away—fading in peaceful death, to meet him whom she loved in heaven. Then the jasmine spray opened its great white bells, and poured out streams of wondrous fragrance; it was its only way of weeping for the dead. But the wicked brother saw the lovely, blossoming plant, and claimed it for his own possession. He placed it in his chamber, close to his bed, for it was beautiful to look upon, and its fragrance was rich and sweet. The Elf of the roses followed it and flew from flower to flower, in each of which dwelt a tiny soul; he told them the story of the murdered youth whose head was now dust with their dust, and of the wicked brother and the heart-broken maiden.

"We know it, we know it!" cried the souls of the flowers. "Have we not sprung from his eyes and lips? We know it all!" And they waved their heads in strange, mysterious fashion. The Elf of the roses could not understand how they could be so calm; he flew out to the honey-bees and told them all the story. The bees

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told it to their queen, and she commanded that on the next day the murderer should be slain. But on that very night—it was the first night after the young girl's death—as the brother lay sleeping in his bed, close to the jasmine tree, the blossoms unfolded, and unseen, but armed with poisonous stings, out streamed the souls of the flowers, placed themselves in his ear, telling him fearful dreams, flew across his lips and stung his tongue with their poison-darts.

“Now we have avenged the dead!” they cried, and flew back to the white bells of the jasmine. When the morning came, and the window was opened wide, in flew the Elf of the roses, the queen bee and her swarm of warriors to slay the murderer. But he was already dead. Round his bed stood frightened servants, and said, “The scent of the jasmine has killed him.”

Then the Elf of the roses understood the vengeance of the flowers, and told it to the queen bee, who buzzed with all her swarm round the flower-pot. No one could drive the bees away. One of the men took up the flower-pot to carry it out, and a bee stung his hand, so that he let fall the pot, and it broke to pieces. Then they saw the whitened skull, and knew that the dead man on the bed was a murderer.

The queen bee buzzed through the air, and sang of the vengeance of the flowers and of the Elf of the roses; and how behind the smallest petal lives one who can reveal and avenge all evil.



The Emperor's New Clothes.



ANY years ago there lived an emperor, who thought so much of new clothes, that he spent all his money on magnificent costumes. He cared nothing at all about his army or the theatre; his only pleasure was walking out to show his new clothes. He had a coat for every day in the year, and just as one says of a king, "he is in the council," so one always said of this emperor, "he is in his toilette chamber."

The great town where he lived was very lively; foreigners used to arrive there every day. One day there came two swindlers, who gave themselves out for weavers, and said that they could weave the most beautiful cloth that could be imagined. It was not only that the colours and patterns were so unusually beautiful, but that the clothes which were made out of the material possessed the singular quality of being invisible to any one who was either stupid or unfit for his office.

"Those would indeed be valuable clothes," thought the emperor. "If I had them on I should be able to get at the truth as to which men in my kingdom are unfit for the office which they hold. I could distinguish wise men from fools. Yes, the cloth must be woven for me at once." And he gave the swindlers a great deal of money in advance that they might set about their work. So they put up two looms, and made as if they were weaving, but they had nothing whatever on the looms. They then demanded the finest silk and the richest gold,

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all which they put in their own pockets, and worked away at the empty looms till late in the night. "I should very much like to know how they are getting on with the cloth," thought the emperor; but he felt positively nervous when he reflected that no one would be able to see it, who was either stupid or unfit for his office. Now he certainly took it for granted that he had nothing to fear for himself, but still he preferred to send some one else first just to see how it was getting on. All the townsfolk knew of the singular power of the cloth, and every body was anxious to see how worthless and stupid his neighbours were.

"I will send my worthy old minister to the weavers first," thought the emperor. "He can decide best how the cloth looks, for he has plenty of brains, and no one could be better fitted for his post than he is."

Well, the good old minister entered the room where the two swindlers sat working at their empty looms. "Heaven preserve us!" thought the old man, "I can't see a mortal thing!" But he did not say so. The swindlers begged him to be so kind as to step nearer, and asked him if it were not a beautiful design and colour.

"Great heavens!" he thought to himself. "Can I be stupid? I have never found it out, and no one else must either. Am I unfit for my office? Oh, it will never do for me to say I can't see the cloth!"

"Have you nothing to say to it?" asked one of the weavers.

"Very nice, very charming," answered the old minister, looking hard through his spectacles. "The pattern and the colours are equally wonderful. Yes, I shall tell the emperor that I am very pleased with it."

"We are glad of that," said the weavers; and then

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they mentioned the names of the colours and explained the singular pattern. The old minister paid great attention, so that he might repeat it all to the emperor, which he did as soon as he got back. The swindlers then demanded more money, more silk, and more gold, all of which they pretended to use in the weaving. They pocketed all they received; not a thread came on the looms, but they went on as before, working busily at nothing.

Soon afterwards the emperor sent another honourable statesman to see how the weaving was going on, and whether the cloth would soon be ready, and he fared no better than the first. He looked, and looked, but since there was nothing there but the empty looms, nothing could he see.

"Is it not a splendid piece of cloth?" asked the two swindlers, pointing out the beauties of the pattern which was not there at all.

"I am not stupid," thought the statesman; "it must be my good office that I am not fit for. It is rather absurd, but I must keep my own counsel," and so he praised the cloth which he did not see, and expressed his delight at the beautiful colours and tasteful pattern.

"Yes, it is quite charming," he said to the emperor. All the town was talking about the beautiful cloth. The emperor thought that he should like to see it himself while it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a suite of distinguished men, among whom were the two eminent statesmen who had been there before, he went to the two cunning weavers, who were weaving away with might and main, but without either fabric or thread.

"Is it not magnificent?" cried the two old statesmen who had been there before. "Let your majesty deign

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to remark the pattern, the colours," and they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that all the others could see the cloth.

"What!" thought the emperor. "I see nothing at all! Oh, that is dreadful! Am I a fool? Am not I fit to be emperor? That would be the most shocking thing that has ever happened to me. Yes, it is very pretty," he said; "it has my imperial approval." And he nodded in a condescending manner, and looked at the empty looms, for he would not say that he could see nothing. The whole suite who were with him looked, and looked, and could make no more of it than the others, but they said after the emperor, "Yes, it is very pretty." They advised him to wear the magnificent dress for the first time in the great procession which was about to take place. "Charming, elegant, exquisite!" was passed from mouth to mouth; every one seemed immensely delighted, and the emperor granted the swindlers the title of "weavers to the imperial court."

The whole night through, before the day when the procession was to take place, the two swindlers were up and stirring. They had lighted sixteen candles, and all the townspeople could see how hard they were working to finish the emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth down from the looms, they cut with great scissors in the air, they sewed with needles which had no thread in them, and at last they said "The clothes are ready." The emperor came himself with his most distinguished nobles; and the swindlers lifted up one arm high in the air as if they were holding something, and said, "Look! here are the trousers, here is the coat, here is the mantle!" and so on. "It is as light and fine as cobweb, one would think one had nothing on, but that is just the beauty of it!" "Yes," said the

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noblemen; but they could not see anything, because there was nothing to be seen. "May it please your imperial majesty graciously to take off your clothes," said the swindlers, "and we will put on your new ones here before the large mirror."

The emperor took off all his clothes, and the swindlers pretended to put on each separate article of the newly-finished suit, while the emperor twisted and twirled about before the mirror.

"How beautifully they sit!" exclaimed everybody. "What a splendid fit! What a pattern, and what colours. It is an exquisite costume!"

"They are waiting outside with the canopy which is to be held over your majesty in the procession," announced the master of the ceremonies.

"Look, I am ready!" said the emperor; "Doesn't it fit well?" and then he turned once more to the looking-glass, as if he were carefully examining his new costume. The chamberlains who were to bear his train pretended to lift up something from the floor, and walked just as if they were holding a train in the air; they dared not let it appear that they could see nothing.

So the emperor walked in procession under the splendid canopy, and all the crowd, in the street and at the windows, exclaimed, "Look how incomparably beautiful the emperor's new clothes are! What a train he has! and how extremely well they fit." No one would allow it for a moment that he could see nothing at all, for then he must either be considered stupid or unfit for his office. None of the emperor's clothes had been such a success as these. "But he has nothing on!" cried a little child at last. "Just listen to this little innocent," said its father; and one whispered to

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another what the child had said. "But he has nothing on!" shouted all the people at last. That struck the emperor, for it appeared to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, "I must go through with the procession now." And the chamberlains walked more stiffly than ever, and held up the train which was not there at all.

The Storks.



IN the last house in a little village was a stork's nest. The mother-stork sat in it with her four young ones, who all stretched out their pointed black beaks which had not had time to turn red yet. A little way off, on the top of the pointed roof, stood the father-stork, erect and stiff as could be. He had drawn up one leg under him, so as not to be entirely idle while he stood on guard. You would have thought he was cut out of wood, so still he stood. "It looks highly genteel for my wife to have a sentinel near her nest," he thought; "no one can tell that I am her husband. People are sure to think that I have been ordered to stand here. That looks so aristocratic!" And he went on standing on one leg.

Down in the street below, a troop of children were playing, and as soon as they saw the storks, one of the boldest began, and all the rest joined in after him, to

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sing the old song about the storks. But they only sang it as they could remember it :—

“Stork, stork ! fly home, I beg,
Leave off standing on one leg ;
Your wife is sitting in the nest,
Rocking the little ones to rest :—
But the first shall be hanged,
And the second stabbed instead,
And the third shall be roasted,
And the fourth shot dead ! ”

“Just listen to what those boys are singing ! ” cried the young storks ; “ they say we shall be hanged and



roasted.” “Never you trouble about that,” said the mother stork ; “ don’t listen to it, and then it wont hurt you.”

But the boys went on singing, and they snapped their

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fingers at the storks ; one boy, however, whose name was Peter, said that it was wicked to mock at dumb creatures, and would not play with them. The mother-stork comforted the young ones. "Don't pay any attention to them," she said ; "just look at your father how quietly he stands, and that on one leg !" "We are very frightened," said the young storks, and they drew down their heads deep into the nest.

The next day, no sooner did the children come out to play again and see the storks, than they began their song—

"The first shall be hanged,
And the second stabbed instead."

"Shall we be hanged and stabbed ?" said the young storks. "Certainly not," said the mother ; "you shall learn to fly ; I shall drill you nicely. Then we will fly out to the meadow and pay the frogs a visit. They will bow to us in the water and sing, 'Ko-ax, ko-ax !' and then we shall eat them up ; it will be such fun." "And what then ?" asked the young storks. "Then all the storks in this country will meet together, and the grand autumn review will begin ; everybody must fly well ; it is of the highest importance, for whoever cannot do it is stabbed to death by the general's beak. So mind you try and learn something when we begin our practice." "Then we shall be stabbed after all, as the boys said, and just listen, they are singing it again now."

"Listen to me and not to them," said the mother-stork. "After the grand review, we shall fly to warm countries far from here, over mountains and forests. We shall fly to Egypt, where there are three cornered stone houses that run to a point, high above the clouds. They are called pyramids, and are older than any stork

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can imagine. There is a river, too, which overflows its banks, and turns the whole country to mud. One walks about in the mud, and eats frogs."

"Oh-h!" cried the young storks. "Yes, it is most delightful. One does nothing but eat all day long; and while we are enjoying ourselves so much, there is not a green leaf on the trees in this country; it is so cold that the clouds freeze in pieces and fall down in little white rags." It was the snow she meant, but she could not describe it any better.

"Do the naughty boys freeze in pieces?" asked the young storks. "No, they don't freeze quite in pieces, but they do very nearly. They are obliged to sit and shiver in a dark room, while you are flying about in foreign countries, where there are flowers and warm sunshine."

Time passed on, and the young storks grew so tall that they could stand upright in their nests, and look about far and wide. The father-stork came every day with beautiful frogs and young snakes, and every kind of stork dainties that he could find. And it was most amusing when he showed them all his wonderful feats. He could lay his head right on to his tail, and clap with his beak as if it were a little clapper; and he told them stories all about the marshes. "Now you must learn to fly," said the mother-stork one day, and the four young ones were obliged to go out on to the top of the roof. How they waddled about, and balanced themselves with their wings, and after all were near tumbling off ever so many times.

"Just look at me!" said the mother. "This is the way to hold your head; this is the way to place your feet. One, two; one, two; that's the way to get on in the world." Then she flew a short distance, and the

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young ones gave a little helpless jump. Bump! down they came, for their bodies were so top-heavy.

"I won't fly," said one of the young ones, creeping back into the nest; "I don't care about going to warm countries."

"Do you want to freeze here, then, when the winter comes? Do you want the boys to come and hang you, and burn you, and roast you? Shall I call them now?"

"No, no!" cried the young stork, and hopped out again on to the roof after the others. On the third day they could fly a little way, and they thought they could hover motionless in the air. They tried it; and bump, down they came, and had to flutter their wings quickly. Then the boys came into the street below, and sang—

"Stork, stork, fly home, I beg."

"Shall we not fly down and pick out their eyes?" asked the young ones.

"No; leave them alone," said the mother. "Listen to me, that is of much greater consequence. One, two, three! now fly to the right: one, two, three! now fly to the left round the chimney. That was very well. That last stroke with the feet was so graceful and true, that I shall give you leave to fly with me to the marsh to-morrow. We shall meet several nice stork families with their children; let them see that mine are the best bred, and that you can strut about nicely. It looks well, and inspires respect."

"But may we not revenge ourselves on those naughty boys?" asked the young storks.

"Let them shout till they are tired. You will fly up to the clouds, and go to the country of the pyramids, while they are being frozen and have not even a green leaf or a sweet apple."

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"But we will have our revenge," they whispered one to another, and then they were drilled again. Now, of all the boys in the street none was fonder of singing the mocking song than the very one who had begun it, and he was a little fellow, perhaps not more than six years old. The young storks, however, thought he was a hundred, because he was so much taller than their father and mother, and what did they know about the ages of children and grown-up people? Their whole vengeance was meant for this boy; he had begun it first, and he was the one to keep it up. The young storks were furious, and as they grew bigger they were less inclined to put up with it. The mother was obliged to promise them at last that they should be revenged, but not till the last day of their stay.

"First, we must see how you behave at the grand review. If you come off badly so that the general stabs you through the breast with his beak, why the boys will be in the right, at least in one sense. Now, let us see."

"Yes, that you shall," cried the young storks, and from that time they practised every day, and took such pains, that at last they flew so gracefully and easily that it was a pleasure to see them. Autumn came on; all the storks began to flock together and pass over into warm countries during our winter. It was something like a review. Over forests and villages they went, just to show how well they could fly; for it was a long voyage that lay before them. The young storks got through so capitally that they received the certificate "Highly commended," with frogs and mice. It was the first-class certificate, and they might eat the frogs and mice. And so they did. "Now we will revenge ourselves," they said. "Yes, certainly," said the mother-stork. "I have thought of just the very thing. I know

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where the pond is where all the little children lie till the stork brings them to their parents. The pretty little things sleep and dream more sweetly than they will ever dream again. Every father and mother would like to have such a child, and every child longs for a little brother or sister. Let us fly down to the pond and fetch one for every child who would not sing the wicked song, nor mock at the storks."

"But the one who began it—the wicked, ugly boy," screamed the young storks, "what shall we do to him?"

"In the pond there lies a little dead baby, who has dreamed itself to death—we will take that for him, and he will cry because we have brought him a little dead brother. But the good boy—you have not forgotten him, I hope?—the one that said it was wicked to mock at creatures, we will bring him a brother and a dumb sister as well. And since the boy was named Peter, you shall all be named Peter, too."

And everything was done as she said; all the storks were called Peter, and are called so to this day.

Two Lovers.



HUMMING-TOP and a ball were lying together in a box among many other playthings, and the top said to the ball, "Shall we not be engaged to each other, you and I, since we are thrown together in the same box?" But the ball, which was covered with morocco, and thought as much of herself as any fine lady could do, would not even listen to such a thing.

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The next day came the little boy who owned the playthings; he painted the top red and yellow, and drove a brass nail into the middle of it. It looked most brilliant when it spun round. "Look at me," said the top to the ball; "shan't we be engaged? We suit each other so exactly; you can leap and I can dance. No one could possibly be happier than we should be." "Indeed! That is your opinion," said the ball. "You are probably not aware that my papa and mamma were morocco slippers, and that I have a Spanish cork in my body." "Well, I'm made of mahogany," said the top. "The mayor himself turned me; he has a lathe of his own, and he turned me just for his amusement." "May I depend upon that?" asked the ball. "May I never be whipped if it's false!" replied the top. "You know how to plead your cause well," said the ball; "but indeed I cannot, I am as good as engaged to a swallow. Every time I fly up in the air he puts his head out of his nest and says 'Will you?' And I have said yes in my own mind, so that is as good as a half engagement. But I shall never forget you." "Much good that will do," said the top. And they did not speak to each other again.

The next day the ball was taken out by the little boy. The top watched it flying high into the air like a bird, till it flew right out of sight. It came back again after a while, but it gave a great bounce every time it touched the earth; and that occurred either out of its upward longings, or because it had a Spanish cork in its body. The ninth time, however, the ball stayed away, and did not come down again; the little boy looked and looked for it, but off it was. "I know very well where she is," sighed the top, "She is in the swallow's nest; she has married the swallow."

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The more the top thought of her, the more desperately in love he grew ; the very fact that he could not marry her only increased his affection, and the fact of her having accepted somebody else was another peculiar feature in the case. The top danced about and spun round, but his thoughts were always with the ball, who daily grew fairer and fairer in his memory. Years passed away, and now it was an old love. The top himself was no longer young. But behold ! one day he was gilt all over—never had he looked so handsome before ; he was a gold top now, and spun till he hummed again. That was something like. But all at once he sprang up too high, and off he was. They sought and sought for him, even down into the cellar ; but he was not to be found. Where was he ?

He had jumped right into the dust-bin, among all kinds of things—cabbage-stalks, sweepings, and dirt that had fallen down from the roof. “ Well, this is a pretty situation. I shall soon lose my fine gilding here. What a low set I have fallen among.” He glanced furtively at a long, leafless cabbage-stalk, and at a queer-looking round thing, that looked like an old apple. But it was no apple ; it was a ball that had lain for years in the roof-gutter, and been soaked through and through

“ Thank goodness, here comes one of my own class, to whom I can speak,” said the ball, looking at the gilt top. “ I am really made of morocco, sewn by the hands of ladies ; and I have a Spanish cork in my body, though no one would think so to look at me now. I was once on the point of marrying a swallow, but I fell into the roof-gutter, where I lay for five years, and was quite soaked through. Believe me, that is a long time for a young ball.”

But the top did not say a word ; he thought of his old

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love, and the more he heard the more certain he was that it was she. The servant-girl came up just then to turn out the dust-bin. "Hallo! why here is the gold top," she cried.

And the top came once more to honour and distinction, but nothing was ever heard of the ball. The top never spoke again of his old flame; it dies out you see; when the beloved one has lain for five years in the roof-gutter and been soaked through—one does not even speak when one meets her in the dust-bin.

The Year's Story.



It was far on in January, a fearful snow-storm was raging. The snow whirled through streets and lanes, clung to the window panes, and fell in heaps from the roofs. Everybody seemed in a hurry; they ran, and flew, and rushed into each other's arms, where they held on tight and were safe, at least for a while. Carriages and horses were powdered over as if with fine white sugar, the footmen stood with their backs close against the carriage, and drove with faces turned from the wind; the foot-passengers kept in the shelter of the carriages, which moved slowly through the deep snow, and when the storm was lulled at last, and a narrow footpath had been shovelled away in front of the houses, people would stand still on it when they met any one. No one liked

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to take the first step, and tread aside in the deep snow, to let the other pass by. There they stood, motionless, until, as if by a sudden, tacit agreement, each gave up one leg for lost, and plunged it into the heap of snow.

Towards evening the wind had fallen, the sky looked as if it had been newly swept, and made higher and more transparent; the stars seemed brand-new, and some of



them were wondrously bright and clear. Everything froze till it cracked again, the topmost layer of snow was so hard before morning, that it could bear the sparrows; they hopped up and down the snow heaps, but they could not find much to eat, and they were terribly cold.

"Tweet!" said one to the other, "call this a new year? Why, it's worse than the old one. We might just as well have kept the last. I am dissatisfied, and I have a right to be so."

"Yes; and yet men are running about firing of shots

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in honour of the new year," said a little frozen-out sparrow. "They throw missiles against the doors, and seem beside themselves for joy because the old year is gone away. I was glad of it myself, for I hoped we should have warm weather; but nothing of the kind, it is worse than ever. The people must have made a mistake in their calculation of the time."

"So they have," said a third, who was old and white-tailed. "They have what they call an almanack, entirely their own invention, and everything has to take the time from that; but it is all wrong. The year begins when the spring comes; that's the course of nature, and that's the way I reckon."

"But when does the spring come?" asked the others. "It comes when the stork returns, but that is very uncertain. In the town no one knows anything definite about it; they know more in the country. Shall we fly out there and wait? We shall certainly be nearer the spring there, than we are here."

"That is all very well," said one of the sparrows, who had been chirping and hopping about for a long time without saying anything; "but I have found one or two comforts in the town that I should be afraid of missing out there. Up a court near here there lives a family of people who have had the sensible idea of putting three or four flower-pots outside the window, with the round holes in the bottom of the pot turned outward to the street. Now these holes are just large enough for me to fly in and out. I and my husband have our nest inside, and all our young ones have been brought up from the same place. Of course the people arranged the whole affair, so that they might have the pleasure of seeing us, or else they would never have thought of it. And for their own amusement they throw

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out bread crumbs, so that we get our meals regularly, and are quite provided for. I think, therefore, that I and my husband will stay, although we are very dissatisfied, still we shall stay." "And we shall fly off to the country," said the others, "to see if the spring is not coming!" So off they flew.

Out in the country the winter was sharp indeed. It froze many degrees harder than in the town; the keen wind swept across the snow covered plains; the peasant sat in his sleigh with great driving gloves on, and beat his arms smartly across his chest, to keep the cold out; the whip lay on his knees; the lean horses ran till they smoked again; the snow crackled; the sparrows hopped about in the wheel ruts and shivered. "Tweet! when will the spring come? It is a long while coming." "Very long!" sounded* from the nearest snow covered hill across the field. It might have been an echo, or the voice of the strange old man who sat there on the piled up snow, out in the wind and weather. He was all in white, like a peasant in a coarse smock frock, with white hair, pale face, and great clear eyes.

"Who is the old man yonder?" asked the sparrows.

"I know," said an old raven, who was sitting on the finger-post, and was condescending enough to acknowledge that they were all little birds in the sight of God, and therefore deigned to talk and explain things to the sparrows: "It is winter, the old man of last year; he is not dead as the almanack says, but he is guardian to the little spring who is coming. Yes, winter still rules the year. Ugh! aren't you cold, you little things?"

"Now, is it not just as I said?" exclaimed the youngest; "the almanack is a mere human invention, and not at all according to nature. They ought to have left that to us who are more delicately constituted."

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One week, two weeks, passed away. The frozen lake lay stark and looked like molten lead, and there came damp, ice-cold mists that hung over the earth; the great black crows flew off in long, silent files. It was as if all was sleeping. Then a sunbeam darted across the lake, which glittered like burnished silver. The snow upon the fields no longer sparkled, but the white figure, winter himself, sat still there, his eyes turned fixedly southwards; he did not see how the snow-carpet sank suddenly into the earth, and here and there a green spot came to light. All at once the air was filled with sparrows. "Tweet, tweet! is the spring coming now?"

"The spring!" re-echoed over field and plain, and through the dark brown woods where the moss glittered bright green on the tree-stems; up from the south came the first storks flying through the air, on the back of each sat a lovely little child, a boy and girl. The children kissed the earth as if in greeting, and wherever they set their feet, there sprang up white flowers through the snow. Hand in hand they came to the old ice-man, winter, and nestled in tender greeting close to his breast, when in a moment all three, and the whole landscape with them, were shrouded in thick, damp vapour, veiling all around. Gradually the wind rose—rose to a roar, and with wild fury drove away the mist. The sun shone warm; the winter had vanished, and spring's fair children sat upon the New Year's throne.

"That I do call a new year!" said the sparrows. "Now we shall doubtless obtain our due, and get some compensation for the hard winter."

Wherever the two children turned, there broke forth green buds on bush and tree; the grass shot up, the seed grew greener in the fields. The little girl strewed flowers all around; they lay piled up in her dress, and

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though she threw them out in showers, the dress was always full, till in her eagerness she scattered a perfect snow-storm of blossoms on the apple and peach-trees so that they stood out in full glory, even before they had put forth their green leaves. Then she clapped her hands, and so did the little boy, on which flocks of birds came flying up, no one knew from whence, and all of them twittered and sang, "The spring is come!"

It was beautiful to see! Many a poor old woman crept out of her cottage door into the sunshine, to stretch herself comfortably, and cast a look on the yellow flowers that bloomed so proudly in the fields. All around her looked as it used to do in her own young days long ago; the world itself looked young again. "It is a blessed day out of doors, to-day," she said. The wood-roffe was already there, fresh and fragrant; violets in abundance, primulas and anemones were coming up, and every blade of grass was full of life and sap; it was a royal carpet on which one felt obliged to sit and rest. There, too, sat the children of the spring, hand in hand; sang, laughed, and grew taller day by day.

A soft rain fell upon them, but they did not feel it; rain drops and joyous tears were mingled in one. Bride and bridegroom, they kissed each other, and at their kiss the forest trees burst into leaf. When the sun rose it found the woodlands green.

Hand in hand walked the bridal pair under the fresh green roof of leaves, where only the play of light and shadow brought out the ever-varying colours. What virgin purity, what refreshing fragrance breathed from the delicate leaves! Clear and sparkling rippled brook and streamlet between the velvet sedge, over the coloured pebbles. All nature breathed of eternal peace and plenty.

* The cuckoo sang, and the lark trilled; it was a glorious

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spring ; but the willows would wear woollen gloves over their blossoms, they are so very prudent ; it is quite tiresome of them.



Days—weeks passed away ; the warmth came steadily downwards ; waves of hot air surged through the corn,

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which grew more golden day by day. The white water-lily, the lotus of the north, spread out its wide green leaves upon the mirror of the woodland lakes, and the fishes sought its cool shadow. On the sheltered side of the wood, where the sun caught the walls of the peasants' houses and warmed the unfolded roses, and the cherry-trees which were loaded with black, juicy, sun-filled fruit, there sat the wife, she whom we have seen as child and bride; her glance rested on the dark, soaring clouds, which, violet-tinged, heavy and shaped like mountain crests, rose higher and higher. They came from three sides, ever-increasing like a petrified, inverted sea; they sank down towards the woods, where all lay hushed as in a trance. Not a breath of air was stirring, the birds were silent, awe and expectation thrilled the landscape; but along the roads and by-ways carriage, horse, and foot-passengers hurried along to seek for shelter. Then suddenly it flamed out as if the sun had blazed from the sky—blinding, dazzling, devouring—and the darkness closed in again with a roar and a crash. The water poured down in streams; light followed dark, and thunder chased the silence.

The young, brown, feathery reeds on the moor rose and fell in steady waves; the tree-sprays in the forest were veiled in rainy mist; darkness came; light broke in; silence and tumult followed each other. The grass and corn lay as if trodden down, and washed away never to rise again. Suddenly the rain dwindled to solitary drops; the sun shone out, and on blade and leaf the raindrops sparkled like pearls. The birds sang, fishes darted to and fro across the surface of the water. Swarms of gnats danced in the air, and far out on a rock in the salt, lashing waters of the sea, sat the summer himself—the stately man with stalwart limbs

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and wet, dripping hair—made young again by his fresh bath, he sat there in the warm sunshine. All nature had won back her youth; all around was lovely, strong, luxuriant. It was summer—bright, glorious summer!

Pleasant and sweet rose the fragrance from the swelling clover-fields; the bees were humming round the ruined temple of the old gods; blackberry tendrils wound round the stone altar, newly washed by the rain, and glittering in the sun; thither flew the queen bee with her swarm, and made ready wax and honey. None saw it but the summer and his queenly wife; for them was the altar-table spread, and decked with nature's offering.

The sunset sky burned like gold; no cathedral dome sparkles with such lustre, and the moon shone from dusk to sunrise—it was summer!

Days passed—weeks passed away. The bare scythes of the reapers gleamed in the corn-fields; the heavy boughs of the apple trees bent low under the red and yellow fruit; the hops breathed fragrance from their hanging clusters, and underneath the hazel bushes where the nuts hung in rich bunches, man and wife were resting—the Summer with his thoughtful wife.

"What lavish wealth!" she said, "all round the blessing has spread; everywhere it is sweet and home-like, and yet—I know not why—I long for rest, for peace; I cannot find the word. See, they are ploughing again in yonder field. Men are always trying to gain more and more. At a little distance behind the plough come flocks of storks, the birds of Egypt, who carried us hither through the air. Do you remember how we children came up to the northern land? We brought with us flowers, and pleasant sunshine, and green woodlands. The wind has dealt hardly with them; they

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darken and turn brown like the trees of the south, but unlike them they bear no golden fruits."

"Do you wish to see the golden fruit?" cried the Summer; "rejoice then!" He raised his hand and the woodland leaves turned red and golden; a glory of colour fell on every forest; the hedges flamed out with scarlet hips and haws; the elder trees hung heavy with dark rich clusters; wild chestnuts burst from their green shells, and in the woods the violets bloomed a second time.

But the queen of the year grew paler and more silent. "It blows cold," she said; "the night brings chill mists. I long for the home of my childhood." She watched the storks each and all as they flew away, and stretched out her hands after them. She looked up to the nests which were standing empty; in one of them grew the long stemmed cornflower, in another the yellow rape-seed, as if the nest was only there for their comfort and shelter, and the sparrows flew into the storks' nests. "Tweet! Where are the good people of the house? I dare say they cannot bear the cold, and so have left the country. A pleasant journey to them!"

The forest leaves grew yellower, and one after another fell to the earth; the autumn wind blew stormily; the season was far advanced; at the fall of the yellow leaf the queen of the year stood gazing with soft eyes at the shining stars; her husband by her side. A gust of wind whirled through the leaves, they fell in showers, but the queen had vanished, and only one white butterfly, the last of the year, flew through the chilly air.

Damp mists came, the icy wind blew, and the long, dark nights drew on. The ruler of the year stood there with snow white locks; he knew it not; he thought it was the snow flakes falling from the clouds, for a thin

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covering lay over the green field. And the church bells rang out for Christmas-tide.

"The bells of the nativity are ringing," said the king of the year, "soon will the new royal pair be born, and I shall rest with my queen, rest in the shining stars."

And in the dark green fir woods, where the snow lay, came the Christmas angel to bless the young trees which were to adorn the festival.

"Joy in the home and under the green boughs," said the ruler of the year; in a few weeks he had changed into an old, old white haired man. "My time of rest is at hand, the young children will take the crown and sceptre."

"The power is still thine," said the Christmas angel; "the power, but not the rest. Let the snow lie warmly over the young seed; learn to see another receive homage while yet the rule is thine. Learn to be forgotten and yet to live. The hour of thy freedom comes when the spring appears."

"When will the spring come?" asked the Winter.

"It will come when the stork returns."

And the Winter sat with snow white hair and beard; ice-cold, and aged, and bent; but strong with the ice and storm—high on the snow drift of the hill, and looked southwards—as he had sat and looked before. The ice cracked, and the snow crackled, the sledges circled on the shining lakes; ravens and crows stood out sharply from the white ground, no wind breath stirred. In the frost-bound air the winter clenched his hands, and the ice lay fathom thick between land and land.

Then the sparrows came again from the town and asked, "Who is the old man yonder?" And the raven sat there again, or his son, which is the same thing answered them and said, "It is the Winter; the old

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man of last year. He is not dead, as the almanacks say, but he is the guardian of the coming spring."

"When will the spring come?" asked the sparrows. "Then we shall be well off and have better food. The old year wasn't worth much."

And in silent thought the Winter nodded towards the black, leafless woods where every bough showed its graceful form and tracery against the sky. During the winter sleep, damp vapours floated slowly from the clouds; the old man dreamed of his youth and manhood, and towards daybreak the whole wood stood glorious in shining hoar frost; that was the winter's summer dream; the sunshine scattered rime upon the boughs.

"When will the spring come?" asked the sparrows.

Spring sounded like an echo from the hills where the snow lay. The sun seemed warmer, the snow melted, the birds sang, "Spring is coming!"

And high through the air came the first stork, the second following; each carried a lovely child, who bent down on the open field and kissed the earth; they kissed, too, the silent old man, and like Moses on the mount he vanished, borne by the encircling cloud.

The Year's Story was ended.

"That is very accurate," said the sparrows, "and very beautiful too; but it is not according to the almanack, and so it is all wrong together."



The Elfin Hill.



ONE or two great lizards were running to and fro in the clefts of an old tree; they understood each other perfectly, because they both spoke the lizard tongue. "What a racket and to-do there is in the old elfin hill!" said the one lizard. "I have not been able to close an eye these two nights for the noise. I might just as well have had the toothache, for then I could not sleep.

"Something is going on inside," said the other lizard. "They have the whole hill raised on four stakes till the cockcrow; it is thoroughly ventilated, and the elfin daughters have learned new dances. Something is certainly in the wind!"

"Yes, I have been speaking to an earthworm of my acquaintance," said the third lizard; "he came straight out of the hill where he had been groping day and night in the earth, and had overheard a great deal; he can't see, the miserable creature, but he is very clever at groping about and listening. They are expecting friends in the elfin hill, distinguished friends, but who they were the earthworm either could not or would not say. All the will-o'-the-wisps are engaged to form a torchlight procession, as they call it; and the silver and gold, they have plenty of that in the hill, is being rubbed up and set out in the moonshine."

"Who can the guests be?" cried all the lizards. "Whatever can be going on? Listen, what a disturbance! just listen, what a noise!"

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At that moment the elf hill opened, and an old elf-maid, hollow at the back, came tripping out; she was the elf-king's housekeeper, a distant connection of the family, and wore an amber heart on her forehead. Her legs moved so nimbly, trot, trot; gracious, how she did trot along, right down to the sea to find the night raven.*

"You are invited to the elfin hill this very night," she said; "but will you first do us a great favour and go round with the invitations? You ought to do something of the kind, since you have no house of your own. We expect a few very distinguished friends, magicians who have something to say for themselves, and so the elf-king wants to make a display."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the night raven.

"Anybody may come to the great ball—even men, if they walk in their sleep or do anything else in our line. But the first festival is to be very select; we shall only have the most distinguished company. I have had a dispute with the elf-king, for I thought we ought not even to admit ghosts. The merman and his daughter are to be invited first; they won't perhaps altogether like to come on dry land, but they shall have a wet stone or perhaps something better to sit on, and then I think they will not refuse. All the old demons of the first class, with tails, the witch queen, and the robolds we must have, and I think we should not forget the grave pig, the death horse,† and the church dwarf. Certainly they belong to

* Formerly, when a ghost appeared, the priest cast it out into the earth. When this was done a stake was driven into the place. At midnight the cry "Let go" was heard, the stake was withdrawn, and the exorcised spirit flew away in the shape of a raven with a hole in the left wing. This bird was called the night raven.

† It is a popular superstition in Denmark that a living horse, and in some cases a living pig, should be buried under the foundation of every

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the clergy, but that is only as far as their office is concerned ; they are close connections of ours, and quite on visiting terms."

"Croak," said the night raven, and off he flew to give out the invitations.

The elfin maidens were dancing already on the hill ; they danced with shawls woven out of mist and moon-shine, and that looks very nice for any one who likes that sort of thing. The great hall in the midst of the elfin hill was beautifully decorated ; the floor was washed with moonbeams, and the walls were rubbed with witch ointment till they glittered in the light like tulip leaves. In the kitchen there were plenty of frogs on the spit, snails' skins with children's fingers inside, salad of mushroom spawn, cold mouse, muzzles, hemlock, beer brewed by the marsh queen, and sparkling saltpetre wine from the churchyard vaults. Everything was solid and good ; rusty nails and church-window glass were among the sweetmeats. The old erl king had his gold crown polished with powdered slate-pencil ; it was first form pencil, which is very difficult for an erl king to get. In the bed-rooms curtains were hung and fastened with snail-slime. There was a pretty hurry and bustle !

"Now, I must have this perfumed with burnt horse-hair and pig's bristles, and then, I think, I shall have done my part," said the erl maid.

"Father, dear," said the youngest daughter ; "now, may I know who our grand visitors are to be ?"

"Well, yes," he said, "I may as well tell you. Two of my daughters must be prepared for their weddings ;

church. The ghosts of these animals are called the death horse, or the grave pig. The death horse hobbles nightly on three legs to the door of those about to die.

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for married two of them will certainly be. The old Kobold, from Norway, who lives in the Dovre Mountains, and owns so many rock castles of fieldstone, and a gold mine, which is better than people think—the old Kobold is coming down here with his two sons, who are both looking out for wives. The father is a downright genuine old Norwegian, jovial and straightforward; I know him of old, for we have drunk brotherhood together. He came down here to fetch his wife; she is dead now; she was a daughter of the king of the chalk cliffs of Moen. He took his wife from the chalk, as folks say. I do long to see that old Norwegian Kobold again! The sons, they say, are rather ill-bred, forward young fellows, but I dare say they have had injustice done them; at any rate they will be all right as they grow older. Let me see that they are shown what good breeding is."

"And when are they coming?" said his daughter.

"That depends on wind and weather," said the erl king. They travel very economically. They generally come with a passenger ship. I wanted them to come round by Sweden, but the old man would not hear of trying that way; he does not keep up with the times. That's what I don't like about him."

Two will-o'-the-wisps now came leaping up, one faster than the other, so that was why one got there first.

"They're coming! they're coming!" they cried.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moonlight," said the erl king.

The daughters held the shawls aloft, and curtsied to the ground. There stood the old Kobold from Norway, with his crown of sparkling ice and polished fir cones; he wore a bear-skin and high, warm boots; his sons on the contrary were bare-necked, and wore trousers without braces, for they were stalwart fellows.

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"Is that a hill?" asked the younger of the boys, pointing to the elfin hill.

"In Norway we should call it a hole!"

"Boys!" said the old man: "holes go in, and hills stand out—have you no eyes in your head?"

The only wonderful thing about the place, they said, was that they could understand the language at once. "Don't disgrace yourselves!" said the old Kobold: "people will think you are not half baked."

Then they went into the elfin hill where the really select company was already assembled, and that so quickly that it seemed as if they had been blown together. But there was elegant and suitable accommodation for all. The seafolk sat up to table in great tubs and made themselves quite at home. Every one observed the strictest rules of etiquette; except indeed the two young Norwegian Kobolds, who put their feet right on to the table and seemed to think that everything became them. "Feet off the table!" cried the old Kobold, and they obeyed, but not at once. They tickled the ladies who sat next them with fir cones that they had brought in their pockets, and then they pulled off their boots to make themselves more comfortable, and gave them to the ladies to hold for them. But their father, the old Kobold was very different; he spoke so beautifully about the stately northern rocks, the waterfalls that crashed foaming down with the sound of organs and the roll of thunder, the salmon that leap high out of the foaming water when the Reck plays on his golden harp; about brilliant winter nights when the sleigh bells ring out, and the young men run with burning torches over the ice—ice so transparent, that they can see the fishes start with fright beneath their feet. Yes; he could describe so that you saw the very

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scene before you ; it was as if the saw-mills were set working, and the lads and lasses sang and danced the old Norwegian dance—hurrah ! all at once the Kobold gave the old elf maid a sounding kiss—something like a kiss—and yet they were no relations whatever !

Then the elfin maidens danced—singly, and with stamped cadence ; they did it beautifully ; and then came the figure and solo dances. Goodness ! how they could stretch out their legs, you could hardly tell where they began and where they ended, or which were arms and which legs, everything spun round like shavings from a saw mill, and then they twirled and twisted till the death horse and the grave pig felt ill, and had to be led from the table.

“ Prrrr ! ” cried the old Kobold : “ that’s one way of managing one’s legs ! But what else can they do, besides dance, and stretch out their legs and raise a whirlwind ? ”

“ You shall soon see that,” said the erl king. He called forward the youngest daughter. She was as light and clear as moonlight ; the most delicate of all the sisters. She put a white shaving in her mouth and away she was—quite out of sight. That was *her* trick. But the old Kobold said he shouldn’t like his wife to have that trick, and he did not think his sons cared about it either. The other daughter could walk by her own side just as if she had a shadow, a thing no Kobolds have.

The third was quite different ; she had studied cookery with the marsh elf, and she knew how to stuff alder tree buds with glow worms.

“ She will make a good housewife,” said the old Kobold ; and he drank to her with his eyes, for he did not wish to drink too deeply.

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Then came the fourth and brought her harp: when she struck the first chord every one lifted their left leg, for the Kobolds are all left footed; and when she struck the second chord every one was obliged to do whatever she wished.

"She is a dangerous woman," said the old Kobold; but the two sons went out of the hill, for they had had enough of it.

"And what can the next do?" said the old Kobold.

"I have learned to love all that is Norwegian," she said; "and I will never marry unless I can go to Norway." But the youngest whispered to the Kobold, "That's only because she has heard a Norwegian song that says how when the world sinks away the northern cliffs will be left for monuments; that's why she wants to go up there. She is so dreadfully afraid of sinking down."

"Ho! ho!" cried the old Kobold, "is that the meaning of it? Well, what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the erl king, for he could count; but the sixth would not come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," she said; "nobody cares about me, and I have enough to do to sew my shroud." Then came the seventh and last; and what could she do? Why she could tell fairy tales, as many as she chose.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old Kobold; "tell me one for each."

She took hold of him by the wrist, and he laughed till he chuckled again. When she came to the ring finger—it had a gold ring on then, just as if it knew there was something about to happen—the old man cried out, "Hold

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on to that; the whole hand is yours. I shall take you to wife myself."

"The tale for the ring finger and the little finger are wanting yet," said the elfin maiden.

"We will hear them in the winter," said the Kobold; "and about the birch tree, and the spectre gifts, and the ringing frost. You shall tell them, for no one else knows how up there. We will sit in the stone halls where the pine fire burns, and drink mead out of the golden horns of the old Norwegian kings; the Reck has given me a pair of them. While we sit there Nix will visit us, and sing us songs of the shepherdesses on the mountains. That will be capital. The salmon will leap in the waterfall and beat against the stone wall but it cannot come through. Yes, it, is pleasant in dear old Norway. But where are my lads?"

Ah! where are they? Why running all over the fields, blowing out the will-o'-the-wisps, who were kindly coming up with their torchlight procession.

"What's all the romping?" cried the old Kobold. "I have chosen a mother for you—now you may choose out two of your aunts."

But the youngsters said they would rather make speeches and drink brotherhood; they did not care about marrying. So they made speeches, and drank brotherhood, hanging up their empty horns to show that not a drop was left. Then they took off their coats and went to sleep on the table, for they did not stand on any ceremony. But the old Kobold danced about the room with his young wife, and exchanged boots with her, which is much more genteel than exchanging rings.

"The cock crows!" said the old elf maid, who saw

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to the house-keeping; "we must close the shutters or the sun will burn us up."

And the hill was closed.

But outside the lizards ran to and fro in the cloven tree, and one said to the other, "Well, I do like that old Norwegian Kobold!"

"I like the lads the best," said the earthworm. But then he could not see, poor creature.

The Loveliest Rose in the World.



HERE was once a queen, in whose garden bloomed the most beautiful flowers all the year round, and from every quarter of the world. She loved the roses best, and she had every kind, from the wild hedge rose, with the apple-scented green leaves, to the rarest Provençal rose. They grew up the castle wall, twined round columns and window frames, crept along the corridors and the ceilings of the palace chambers, and each had its own fragrance, shape, and colour.

But within the palace reigned care and sorrow; the queen lay on her sick bed, and the doctors said that she must die. "There is one thing that can save her," said the wisest of them. "Bring her the loveliest rose in the world; the one that tells of the highest and purest love. Let her eyes rest on that before they close for ever, and she is saved."

THE LOVELIEST ROSE IN THE WORLD.

Young and old brought their roses from far and near; each chose the loveliest in his garden, but none was the right one. The rose must be brought from the garden of love—but which of all the roses there told of the highest, purest love?

The poets sang of the loveliest rose in the world; each named his own. Messages were sent through all the



realm to every heart that beat for love; messages to every class and every age. "As yet, no one has named the flower," said the wise physician. "No one has pointed to the place whence it sprang forth in all its glory. It is not the rose from the tomb of Romeo and Juliet, nor from Walburga's grave, although these roses

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will bloom for ever in song. It is not the rose which sprang forth from Winkelried's blood-stained lances, from the sacred blood which streams from the breast of the hero dying for his fatherland, although no death is sweeter, no rose redder than the blood so shed. "Neither is it that wonder-flower, for whose sake men offer up their fresh, bright life in weary days and years, in sleepless nights spent in their lonely chamber—the magic rose of knowledge."

"I know where it blooms," cried a happy mother, bringing her little child to the queen's sick bed. "I know where the loveliest rose in the world is found. The rose, which tells of the highest and purest love, springs from the blooming cheeks of my sweet child, when refreshed by sleep he uncloses his blue eyes, and smiles towards me with all his wealth of love."

"Lovely is this rose, but there is a far lovelier," said the sage.

"Yes ; a far lovelier," said one of the women. "I have seen it—a holier, purer rose there cannot be, but it was pale as the petals of the tea-rose. I saw it on the cheeks of our queen. She had laid aside her royal crown, and was carrying her sick child to and fro in the long, sorrowful night. She wept over it, kissed it, prayed to God for it, as only a mother prays in her hour of need."

"Holy, and wonderful in its strength, is the white rose of sorrow, but it is not the rose we seek."

"No ; the loveliest rose is found before the altar of the Lord," said the good old bishop. "I saw it bloom as if an angel's countenance were shining forth. The young maidens came near to the table of the Lord to renew their baptismal vows, and the rose reddened and paled on their fair cheeks. One young girl stood there and

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gazed towards heaven with all the purity and love of her whole soul. That was the rose that told of the highest, purest love."

"Blessings rest on her!" said the sage; "but, as yet, no one has named the loveliest rose in the world."

A little child stole into the room—the queen's own son; tears were in his eyes and on his cheeks; he held in his arms a large open book, bound in velvet with great silver clasps. "Mother," cried the little one, "oh, listen to what I have just been reading!" He laid the book upon the bed, and read out of it the story of Him who gave Himself up to the death of the cross for us men and for our salvation.

"Greater love hath no man than this!"

A rose-light crossed the pale cheeks of the queen, and her eyes brightened, for she saw that out of the leaves of the book there sprang forth the loveliest rose in the world—the rose that springs from the good of Christ on the tree of the cross.

"I see it!" she cried; "and he who sees this loveliest rose on earth shall never die."

The Steadfast Tin Soldier.



HERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they were all born out of the same old tin spoon. They stood, musket on shoulder, looking straight before them, and their uniform was red and blue. The first words they heard in this world, when the lid was taken

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off the box in which they lay, was the cry, "Tin soldiers!" It was said by a little boy, who was clapping his hands for joy. He had just received them as a birthday present, and he set them up on the table. One soldier was exactly like another, except, indeed, the youngest. He had been cast last of all, when the tin was running short, so that there was only enough for one leg; but he stood as firmly on his one leg as the others did on their two, and he is the only one who became remarkable.

On the table where they were set up were many other playthings. The most striking of all was a prettily-made paper castle. You could see through the tiny windows right into the rooms, and in front of the entrance stood green trees, round a little mirror which looked like a clear lake. Waxen swans swam upon it, and were reflected within it. That was very pretty, but the prettiest of all was a little lady who stood in the open doorway. She, too, was cut out of paper, but she wore a dress of transparent cambric, with a narrow blue ribbon across her shoulders like a scarf, fastened in front with a sparkling tinsel rose as large as her face. The little lady stretched out both her arms for she was a dancer, and then she lifted up one leg so high that the tin soldier could not see it, and thought she had but one, like himself.

"That would be the wife for me," he thought, "but she is so aristocratic, she lives in a castle. I have only a box, and there are five-and-twenty of us in that—it is no place for her. But I must make her acquaintance!" He placed himself behind a snuff-box, which stood on the table; he could see the little lady clearly from that position. There she was, always on one leg, and never losing her balance.

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER.

When the night came on, all the other tin soldiers were put in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to play—they played at war, and paying visits, and giving balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join in, but they could not lift up the lid. The nut-cracker turned somersaults, and the slate pencil amused itself on the table; they made such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, in poetry, too. The only two who never moved from their places were the tin soldier and the dancer. She stood still on the very points of her toes, with both arms outspread, and he was just as steadfast on his one leg, with his eyes never moving from her face. The clock struck twelve—and crash! up flew the lid of the snuff-box, but there was no snuff in it, only an old hobgoblin—it was a toy. “Tin soldier,” said the goblin, “don’t keep staring at what doesn’t concern you.”

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear him.

“Very well! you just wait till to-morrow!” said the goblin.

The next day when the children got up the tin soldier was set up in the window, and whether it was the goblin or the draught is not known, but the window suddenly blew open, and the soldier fell head over heels down from the third story. It was a terrible journey. He kept his leg stiffly in the air, and stuck with his shako and the point of his bayonet between two paving stones. The servant girl and the little boy ran down directly to look for him, but although they were almost near enough to tread on him, they could not find him. If the tin soldier had only cried out, “Here I am!” they would most likely have found him, but he did not consider it becoming to cry out, because he was in uniform.

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Soon it began to rain; the drops came thicker and faster, till at last it was a perfect deluge. When it was over, two street boys ran up. "I say, look here!" cried one of them—"here is a tin soldier; let's have him out, and put him to sail our boat."

They made a boat out of a piece of newspaper, placed the soldier in the middle and launched it on the gutter: the two lads ran along by the side and clapped their hands. Heaven preserve us! how high the waves ran in the gutter, and what a current there was—for it had been a regular downpour. The paper boat rocked up and down, spinning round every now and then till the tin soldier was giddy. He, however, remained steadfast, moved not a muscle, but looked straight before him, shouldering his musket. All at once the boat darted into a long drain; it was just as dark as if he had been in his box.

"Where can I be going to now?" he thought. "It is all the goblin's doing. Ah! if only the little lady were in my boat, it might be twice as dark for all I should care."

Suddenly up came a great water-rat who lived in the drain. "Have you a passport?" said the rat: "out with your passport!" But the tin soldier did not speak, he only held his musket more firmly.

The boat darted on and the rat followed it. Ugh! how he gnashed his teeth and called out to the bits of straw and stick, "Stop him—stop him! he has paid no toll! he hasn't shown his passport!"

The current grew stronger and stronger; the tin soldier could see the daylight at the end of the drain, but at the same time he heard a roar and a rush that might have frightened the bravest man. Only think, just where the tunnel ended, the drain

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER.

emptied itself into a great canal ! It was a dangerous for him as it would be for us to be carried down a mighty waterfall. He was so near it now that there was no chance of stopping. The boat rushed through, the poor tin soldier stood as firm as ever he could ; no one should say of him that he moved an eyelash. Three times—four times, the boat spun round ; it was filled to the very edge with water—it must go down now. The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water ; the deeper the boat sank the more the paper gave way, till the water closed above the soldier's head. He thought of the sweet little dancer whom he would never see again, and the song sounded in his ears—

“ Farewell, farewell, thou warrior bold,
March on to death and glory ! ”

The paper split in two, the soldier sank down and was immediately swallowed up by a large fish.

How dark it was inside the fish ! darker than in the tunnel, and much narrower too. But the tin soldier remained steadfast, and lay at full length, shouldering his musket.

The fish darted to and fro—making the most alarming movements ; when at last he was quite still. A ray of light shot through him : it grew clearer, and a voice cried out “ The tin soldier ! ” The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold, and brought into the kitchen where the cook cut it open with a large knife. She seized the soldier with two fingers round the waist, and carried him into the parlour, for every one to see the distinguished man who had travelled about the world in the inside of a fish. But the tin soldier was not proud. They set him up on the table—and—well ! how strangely

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things do turn out in this world!—there he was in the same room where he had lived before; there were the same children, the same playthings on the table, the lovely castle with the pretty little dancer! She was still standing on one leg, holding the other high in the air; she too was steadfast. That touched the tin soldier—he could have wept tin tears, only that would not have been becoming. He looked at her, but she said nothing.

Then one of the little boys took up the tin soldier and threw him in the fire; he gave no reason whatever for doing so—it must have been the fault of the goblin in the snuff-box.

The tin soldier stood there, lighted up by the flame; felt a great heat, but whether it came from the fire or from his love he did not know. He had lost all his bright colour, perhaps on the journey, perhaps from sorrow, nobody could be sure. He looked at the little dancer, she looked at him; he felt that he was melting, but he remained steadfast, shouldering his musket. Suddenly the door burst open, the wind caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph straight to the tin soldier, flashed out into a flame—and vanished. Thereupon the tin soldier melted away, and the next morning when the housemaid raked out the ashes, she found him in the shape of a little heart. Nothing was left of the dancer but the tinsel rose, and that was burnt as black as a coal.



The Buckwheat.



VERY often when one passes by a field of buckwheat after a storm one finds it blackened, scorched, and dead, as if a flame of fire had swept over it. "That comes from the lightning," the farmer says, but this is what the sparrows told me. The sparrows heard the story from an old willow which grows by a field of buckwheat, a wide-spreading stately willow, but bent with age and cloven asunder in the midst. Out of the cleft grow grasses and flowering brambles; the tree leans forward so that the branches touch the earth, and hang like long green hair.

Corn grows in all the neighbouring fields, barley, and rye, and graceful oats, which, when they are ripe, look like a flock of little canary birds on a bough. The corn was rich and blessed; the fuller the ears the lowlier they bent in thankful humility.

Right in front of the willow was a field of buckwheat. The buckwheat never bent like the other corn, but stood erect and haughty on its stem.

"I am certainly as rich as the corn!" it cried, "and far more beautiful. My flowers are as lovely as the apple blossom; it is a pleasure to look on me and mine. Do you know anything more beautiful than me, you old willow?"

The willow nodded as much as to say "That I do!" But the buckwheat shook itself out for very pride, and said, "Stupid tree! It is so old that the grass grows out of its body."

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Storm came on—the field flowers folded their leaves and bowed their little heads, as it rushed by, but the buckwheat stood erect and defiant.

“Bow your head, as we do,” said the flowers.

“I do not see why I should,” said the buckwheat.

“Bow your head, as we do,” cried the corn. “The angel of the storm is coming. His pinions reach from the clouds to the earth, and he will smite you down before you can beg for mercy.”

“I will not bow,” said the buckwheat.

“Close your flowers and fold your leaves,” said the old willow tree; “do not look at the lightning when the cloud opens: even men dare not do that—for through the lightning one can see into heaven itself, and that sight strikes even human beings blind: what then would become of us—poor growth of the earth—if we ventured it—we who are of so much less worth than they?”

“Of less worth?” said the buckwheat. “I will look straight into heaven itself,” and so it did in its pride and scorn. The lightning came; it was as if the whole world stood in flames.

When the storm was over, the flowers and corn stood in the fresh pure air, revived by the rain; but the buckwheat was burnt black by the lightning, and lay like a dead weed on the earth.

The old willow waved its branches in the air and wept; great drops fell from the green leaves. “Why do you weep?” asked the sparrows. “It is so pleasant here! see how the sun shines and the clouds sail by. Can you not breathe the fragrance from flower and tree? Why do you weep?”

Then the willow told them of the pride of the buckwheat, and of the fall that followed on its pride.

AT THE LAST DAY.

I, who am writing, heard it all from the sparrows, one night when I begged them to tell me a story.



At the Last Day.



THE greatest day of all days for us is the day of our death—the sacred, awful day of the great change. Have you ever seriously thought over this sure, inevitable, last hour of death? There was once a man—an orthodox believer,

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men called him—a defender of the Word which to him was law—a zealous servant of a jealous God. Death stood by his bedside—death with stern, pale face. “Follow me—the hour is come,” he said; and touched with icy finger the man’s feet: they froze and stiffened: touched his forehead; then his heart, which ceased to beat, and the soul followed the death-angel.

In the few seconds that elapsed between this consecration of his feet and heart, all that had filled his past life rose before the dying man like the great waves of a black, sullen sea. His glance shrunk back in terror from the immeasurable depth; round him the myriads of stars, worlds, and heavenly orbs whirled dizzily by in endless space.

At such a moment the sinner shudders, for there is nothing to which he can cling. But the good man lays down his head in quiet trust, saying the childlike prayer—“Thy will be done!” This dying man had never known the childlike heart: he felt himself a man: he did not shrink as a sinner, for he trusted in his creed. Every ordinance of religion had been observed by him in all its strictness; millions of souls, he knew, would tread the broad way of destruction, nay, he would willingly have slain their bodies with fire and sword as their souls must be slain hereafter. But *his* path led towards heaven, whose gates were opened to him by the promised mercy.

The soul followed the angel of death, but it looked back once more on the bed, where lay the form of clay, wrapped in its white shroud—a strange copy of itself.

They flew through a wide hall, that yet looked something like a forest. Nature was clipped and pruned, divided, set up in classes, treated artificially as in a French garden—a masquerade was being held.

AT THE LAST DAY.

"That is human life," said the angel of death.

All the maskers were more or less disguised; they were not the highest or the noblest who were dressed in gold and velvet; the meanest and poorest did not wear the garb of poverty. It was a strange masquerade; and it was wonderful to see how every one held something closely hidden under the folds of his mantle, trying vainly to hide it away out of sight. Vainly, for all he met tore open the mantle and laid it bare: the head of some beast was then clearly seen—with some, a mocking ape, with others, a hideous goat, a poisonous serpent, or a clammy fish.

It was the brute nature that lies deep in all our hearts; and it struggled wildly to get free. All held the long cloak tightly over it, but the others tore it asunder and cried, "Look! this is the one—this is the one!" each laying bare the other's misery.

"What beast was hidden in me?" asked the soul; the angel pointed to a haughty form in front; a glory of coloured rays shone round his head, but the claw of a peacock grasped his heart, and the glory was but the bird's outspread tail.

As they passed along, large birds screamed harshly from the branches of the trees, with human voices. "Wanderer of death, do you remember me?" They were the evil thoughts and passions of his lifetime, crying aloud, "Do you remember me?"

For a moment the soul shuddered: it knew well every voice, every dark thought and base desire that rose up thus in witness against him.

"No good thing dwells in our sinful flesh," he cried; "but my thoughts never came to deeds; the world never saw their evil fruit." He hastened on to escape the hideous cries; but the great black birds flew round

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him and screeched aloud for all the world to hear. He ran like the hunted Indian, and at every step he struck against sharp-edged stones, which cut and tore his feet. "What stones are these?" he cried; "they cover the earth like fallen leaves."

"They are the sharp words you have let fall; they wounded the heart of your fellow-men more deeply than they wound your feet now."

"I did not think of it," cried the soul.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged," resounded through the air.

"We are all sinners," said the soul. "I have kept the law and the Gospel: I have done what I could: I am not as other men."

They stood at the gate of heaven, and the angel of the gateway asked, "What art thou? Declare thy faith, and show it me by thy works."

"I have kept the Commandments. I have humbled myself in the eyes of the world. I have hated and punished sin and sinners!"

"Thou art, then, a follower of Mohammed?" said the angel.

"I?—heaven forbid!"

"He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword," says the Scripture; "that is not thy faith. Art thou one of the children of Israel, who say, with Moses, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth?' who hold that God is God alone for them?"

"I am a Christian."

"I cannot see it by thy works: the teaching of Christ is, pardon, love, mercy."

"Mercy!" re-echoed through the courts of heaven: the portals opened wide, and the soul swept in towards the unveiled glory.

AT THE LAST DAY.

But the blaze of light was so keen and penetrating that it shrunk back as from an unsheathed sword : melody softer and more thrilling than earth may know resounded on every side. The soul trembled and shrank farther and farther, but the heavenly light pierced it through and through, and, for the first time, it felt the heavy, intolerable burden of its pride, and harshness, and sin. The light had conquered. .

"The good I did on earth, I did because I could not help it," cried the soul ; "the evil was my very own."

Blinded by the pure, dazzling light, the soul fell fainting, crushed by its shame, unfit for heaven, trembling at the thought of God's righteousness, helpless to stammer a prayer for mercy.

But mercy, unlooked-for mercy, came to its help. God's heaven revealed itself, God's love received it into its inexhaustible fulness.

"Holy, glorious, loving, and immortal, shalt thou be, soul of man !" was sung around him.

We, too, at the last day, shall shrink, as this soul did, from the glory and splendour of heaven—we shall sink down abashed, with humility and shame. God grant that, supported by love and mercy, glorified, ennobled, and fitted for His kingdom, we may tread the paths of the new life and enter into the eternal light !





Good Temper.

M

Y father left me the best inheritance namely—a good temper. Who was my father? That has nothing to do with good temper; he was, however, plump and lively, and round made; in looks and disposition the very reverse of his trade. What was his trade? what was his position in the social scale? Why, if I had let it be written and printed at the beginning of this story, you would have shut up the book and said—"What an unpleasant title! I don't like that kind of thing." And yet my father was neither a knacker, nor an executioner; quite the contrary, his position placed him before the highest people in the land, with no pre-

GOOD TEMPER.

sumption on his part, he only kept his proper place: he took precedence of the bishop, the prince of the blood—everybody. He was a hearse-driver.

There, now it's out! and I must say that when one saw my father sit perched high up on the chariot of death; dressed in his long black cloak and crape-trimmed, three-cornered hat, and then looked at his round, red, jubilant face, beaming like the sun itself, it was impossible to think of death and mourning; the face said so plainly "Never mind! never mind! it will turn out a great deal better than people think!"

Well, I got my good temper from him, and my habit of going a walk in the churchyard; a very amusing place when you go there in a good temper; moreover I take in the *Daily Intelligencer* as he did.

I am not young. I have neither wife nor child, nor library: but as I said before, the *Intelligencer* is enough for me. It is my favourite newspaper, and so it was my father's; it is very instructive, and contains all that a man need care to know: who preaches in the churches, and in the new books; all the charities; numbers of harmless poems, matrimonial advertisements and appointments, all simple and straightforward. One can really live and die very comfortably and happily when one takes in the *Intelligencer*; besides having at the end of one's life paper enough to be buried on, if one does not like to lie on deal shavings.

The *Intelligencer* and the churchyard! Those are my two daily paths for improving my mind: my sea-side-watering places for restoring my good temper.

Any one can glance through the *Intelligencer* for himself; but come with me to the churchyard: we will go when the sun is shining and the trees are green, and walk among the graves.

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Each is like a book with the back turned uppermost, so that we can read the title of what the book contains, but nothing further; but I can see beyond that, and so could my father. I dot it all down in what I call my grave book, and a very instructive and amusing book it is: the graves are all entered in it and a few more besides.

Here we are in the churchyard.

Here—behind this white railing, where a rose tree used to grow—it is gone now, but a little spray of evergreen from the next grave stretches out its green finger as if to make a little show—here rests a most unhappy man, and yet while he lived he stood well, as people say. He had plenty to live upon, and more besides; but the world of art was too much for him. When he went to the theatre and meant to enjoy himself thoroughly, the machinist had only to turn on too strong a light on one side of the moon, or the aerial effects to fall from above the scenes instead of behind them, or a palm tree to crop up in the Berlin Zoological Garden, or a cactus in the Tyrol, or a beech tree in Norway, and he was furious. As if it signified! Whoever would fret about a thing like that? and in a play, too, where one goes to be amused! Sometimes the audience clapped too much for his liking, sometimes too little. “A bundle of wet wood!” he used to say; “it *won't* light to night?” Then he would turn round to see what sort of people they were; and if they laughed at the wrong time, he fumed and fretted, and made himself really ill. He was a most unhappy man, and now he rests in his grave.

Here lies a very fortunate man; a man, that is, of distinguished position and high birth—a lucky thing for him, for he had nothing else to recommend him; but everything is so wisely ordered in this world that it is

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a pleasure to reflect upon it. He walked through life, all stars, orders, and embroidery; just like the beautifully-worked pearl-studded bell-pulls in fine drawing-rooms, which have a good thick rope behind them to do all their work. He, too, had his good thick rope at his back, a substitute who did all his work for him, and does it still behind another new, embroidered, gold-starred bell-pull. All things are so providentially ordered that it keeps one in a good temper.

Here lies—ah! but this is really very sad! here lies a man, who was trying for sixty-seven years to get a good idea; he only lived for the hope of one day saying a good thing: at last, according to his own estimation, he got his idea—but the rush of joy was too much for him and he died—died of joy before a single creature was the better for it, or had even heard it. I sometimes think his idea won't let him rest in his grave; for suppose it was a joke that could be only brought out at breakfast to have any effect, while he, as a dead man, cannot, according to universal belief, show himself at any other time but midnight, the time is past, then the joke falls flat—no one laughs and the poor man may get into his grave again, idea and all!

It is a melancholy thought!

Here rests a very miserly woman: during her lifetime she used to get up in the night and mew, so that the neighbours might think she kept cats; she was as miserly as that.

Here, is a young lady of good family, who sang at every ball and party; "*Mi manca la voce*"* she used to sing, and that was the truest thing she ever sang in her life.

* "*My voice fails me.*"

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Here lies a maiden of another class. When the voices of the heart begin to sing, reason puts her fingers in her ears ! The pretty maid was on the point of being married, when—it is an every-day story—and there is a pretty saying, “ Let the dead rest.”

Here rests a widow who carried honey on her lips and bitter gall in her heart ; and who used to go from house to house hunting up the faults of her neighbours as a sportsman hunts down the game.

This is a family vault : and every member of this family held so firmly together, that if the whole world and the newspaper into the bargain said one thing, and the youngest boy came home from school and said another, they would believe him against the whole set, because he belonged to the family. And certain it is, that if the family cock crowed at midnight, it was morning for them, if every clock and watchman in the town cried midnight all together.

The great Göethe wrote under the last line of his Faust, “ It may be continued,” and so, too, may our wanderings in the churchyard. I often go there myself : whenever any of my friends or enemies is a little too much for me, I go there and choose out a grave for them and bury him, her, or them right off.

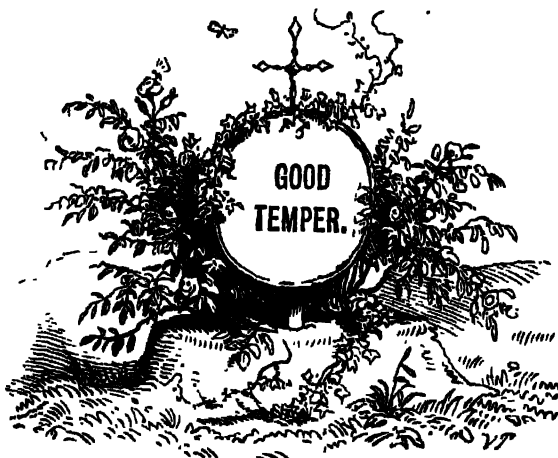
There they lie helpless and dead, till they come back better men.

I write down their life and deeds as they appear to me, in my grave book, and that is what every sensible person ought to do. It is no use getting into a passion when any one drives you wild ; bury him, bury him at once, keep your temper, and take in the *Intelligencer*, that excellent paper, written by the people “ *with a guided hand.*”

When the time comes for me and my life's story to

BIG CLAUS AND LITTLE CLAUS.

be bound up in the grave, let there be written above me the epitaph—



That is my story.

Big Claus and Little Claus.

THERE lived once in the same village two men of the name of Claus; one of them owned four horses, and the other had but one. The villagers used to call the man with four horses "Big Claus," and the man with one horse "Little Claus," in order to know them apart.

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Now let us hear what happened to each of them, for this is a true story.

The whole week through, Little Claus used to plough for Big Claus and lend him his one horse, in return for which Big Claus let him use all his team but only once a week, and that was on Sundays. Yoicks! how Little Claus smacked his whip over the five horses! they were as good as his own for that one day. The sun was shining, all the bells in the belfry were ringing, the village folk dressed in their Sunday best and carrying their hymn book in their hand, went walking by to church, to listen to the preacher. On their way they stopped to look at Little Claus, who was ploughing away with the five horses, smacking his whip, and crying out in the joy of his heart, "Gee-up, my five horses!"

"You must not say that," cried Big Claus; "only one of them belongs to you." But the very next time any one passed by Little Claus quite forgot what he was to say, and called out again, "Gee-up, my five horses!"

"Now you had better drop that," said Big Claus, "for if you say it once again I'll give your horse a rap over his head that will about finish him!"

"I really won't say it again," said Little Claus. But when some more country folk came up and stopped to give him good-day, he thought how well it looked to be ploughing his field with five horse, and, with a loud crack of his whip, he cried out once again, "Gee-up, my five horses!"

"I'll gee-up your five horses for you!" said Big Claus; and, taking up an iron bar, he struck Little Claus's horse on the head so that it dropped down dead on the spot.

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"Oh! now I've no horse left," said Little Claus, crying bitterly.

He flayed his horse, and hung up the skin to dry; then, slinging it across his shoulder in a bag, he set out to walk to the neighbouring town and offer it for sale.

It was a long distance off, and the path lay through a wide, gloomy forest; storm came on, Little Claus lost his way, and before he could find it again he wandered so far from the town that it was impossible for him either to get there or to reach home again before nightfall.

By the roadside he saw a large farmyard; all the shutters were up at the house windows, but the light shone through the cracks. "Perhaps I shall get leave to stay the night here," thought Little Claus, so he went on boldly and knocked at the door.

The farmer's wife opened it, but when she heard what he wanted she told him to go about his business; her husband was not at home, and she could not let in any strangers.

"Well, then, I must stay out in the cold," said Little Claus; and the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Not far off stood a large haystack, and between it and the house was a little outhouse with a flat roof of thatch. "I can sleep up there," thought Little Claus, looking at the roof; "it will make a capital bed, if only the stork won't fly down and peck at my legs!" For on the house roof over-head stood a live stork by the side of its nest.

Little Claus climbed up on to the outhouse, lay down, and made himself comfortable. The wooden shutters outside the windows were not quite closed, so that he could see right into the room within. A large table, covered with wine and fish and roast meat, was what he saw. At the table sat the sexton and the

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farmer's wife, and nobody else; she filled up his glass, and he stuck his fork into the fish, which was his favourite dainty.

"Ah, if one could only get at a little of all that!" thought Claus, stretching his head nearer toward the window. Heavens! what a pile of rich cakes he saw lying ready! It was something like a feast!

At the same moment he heard some one come riding along the turnpike-road to the house; it was the farmer himself, on his way home. He was a good sort of man, but he had one very singular quality—he could not bear the sight of a sexton; it made him positively furious. That was why the sexton always went to pay his respects to the farmer's wife when he knew that her husband was away from home; and that was why the good woman sat before him the best she had in the house. Now, when the farmer's wife heard her husband coming, she was terribly frightened, and she begged the sexton to get into a large, empty chest. He consented at once, because he knew very well that the poor farmer could not endure the sight of a sexton. Then the wife made haste to hide away all the supper in the large oven, for if her husband had seen it he would have been sure to ask what it all meant.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus, from his outhouse, as he saw all the good things disappear.

"Hallo! Who is up there?" cried the farmer, looking round. "What are you lying there for?" he said to Little Claus. "Get down and come in the house with me."

So Little Claus explained how he had lost his way, and begged that he might spend the night there.

"Surely!" said the farmer; "but first we must have something to eat."

BIG CLAUS AND LITTLE CLAUS.

The mistress received them very pleasantly, laid the cloth, and set before them a large dish of porridge. The farmer was very hungry and began to eat with a good appetite, but Little Claus could not help thinking of the nice roast meat and fish and cakes which he knew were in the oven. He had thrown down the sack, with the skin he was going to take to market, under the table at his feet; and, as he did not like the porridge, he trod upon the sack, so that the dry skin squeaked aloud.

"Hush!" cried Little Claus to the sack; but he trod on it again at the same time, till it squeaked louder than before.

"Whatever have you got in your sack?" cried the farmer.

"Oh, it's only a conjuror," said Little Claus. "He says we are not to eat any more porridge, for he has conjured the oven full of roast meat and fish and cakes."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the farmer, making haste to open the oven-door. There, sure enough, were all the dainty dishes which his wife had hidden, but which, he believed, the conjuror had brought there.

His wife dared not say a word; she set out all the dishes on the table, and the two men ate up the fish and meat and cakes. Little Claus trod again on the sack till the skin squeaked. "What does he say now?" said the farmer.

"He says he has conjured us up three bottles of wine. They are in the corner behind the stove."

The woman was obliged to fetch out the hidden wine, and the farmer drank and grew very merry.

He would have liked to have such a conjuror as Little Claus kept in his sack. "Can he raise the devil?" asked the farmer. "I should like to see him now, I feel so merry."

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"Yes," said Little Claus; "my conjuror can do anything I ask of him—can't you?" he cried, and he trod on the sack to make it squeak. "There! did you hear that? He says he can; but it is an ugly sight. We had better let it alone."

"Oh, I am not at all frightened. What does it look like?"

"Just like a live sexton," said little Claus.

"Ugh! that is frightful. Do you know, I cannot abide the sight of a sexton! But, never mind; I shall know what it is, and so I shall be able to bear it. Now I am ready. Only don't let him come too near me."

"Well, I'll ask my conjuror," said Little Claus, treading on the sack, and bending down his ear.

"What does he say?"

"Why, he says if you open that chest in the corner yonder, you will see him cowering down inside; but you must hold the lid tight, lest he should slip out."

"Will you help me to hold it?" said the farmer; and they went up to the chest where the farmer's wife had hidden the sexton, who lay there frightened to death.

The farmer opened the lid a little way, looked in, and jumped back with a loud cry. "I've seen him!" he said; "he is the very image of our sexton. That was a frightful sight!"

They were obliged to drink some more after that; and they drank till far into the night.

"You must sell me your conjuror," said the farmer; "ask anything you like for him. I will give you a bushelful of money, down."

"Oh, I can't," said Little Claus; "just consider what I can get by this conjuror."

"I must have him!" said the farmer; and he went on begging.

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"Well," said Little Claus, at last, "since you have done me a kindness to-night, and given me shelter under your roof, it shall be as you wish. You shall have the conjuror for a bushelful of money; but I must have good measure."

"So you shall," said the farmer, "only you must take that chest away with you; I won't have it left in the house for one moment. Who knows, but that he may be in there now?"

Little Claus then made over to the farmer his sack with the dried skin, and received in exchange a bushelful of money, good measure. The farmer also made him a present of a hand-cart, to wheel away his money and the chest.

"Good-bye!" said Little Claus; and drove off with his money and the chest that held the sexton.

On the other side of the forest was a broad, deep river; the water flowed so fast that it was hardly possible to swim against the stream. A fine new bridge had been thrown across it, and in the middle of this Little Claus stopped, saying, loud enough for the sexton in the chest to hear, "Now, what had I better do with this stupid chest? It is as heavy as if it were full of stones; if I go on wheeling it along, I shall only tire myself out. I'll just throw it in the river; if it swims home after me, well and good; and if not, it doesn't much signify."

He lifted up the chest with one hand, and made as though he were going to throw it into the water. "Put it down!" cried the sexton from within; "let me out first."

"Oh!" cried Little Claus, pretending to be afraid, "he's in there still! I had better throw him over at once and let him drown."

"No, no!" said the sexton; "I'll give you a whole

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bushelful of money if you will let me out."

"That alters the case," said Little Claus, opening the chest. The sexton hurried out and kicked the chest into the river. He then went home, and Little Claus received his bushelful of money; he had had one already from the farmer, so his cart was quite full.

"I've sold my horse pretty well," he said to himself, as he turned out all his money into a great heap on the floor of his room. "Big Claus will be in a passion when he finds out how rich I have become with my one horse; however, I need not tell him all the particulars."

The next day he sent across a boy to borrow a bushel measure from Big Claus. "Now, what can he want with that?" thought Big Claus, and he smeared a little tar at the bottom of the measure, so that part of whatever was put into it might stick. It turned out as he wished, for the measure came back with three large silver crowns at the bottom.

"What is the meaning of this?" thought Big Claus. He went straight to Little Claus and asked him where he had got his money from.

"Oh, I got it for my horse's skin. I sold it yesterday evening."

"That's a good price to get," cried Big Claus. He hurried home, took down an axe, killed all his four horses, skinned them, and drove off to the town. "Skins! skins! who will buy?" he cried along the streets. The shoemakers and tanners came running out to know what he wanted for them. "A bushelful of money for every one," said Big Claus.

"Are you mad?" they cried out all together; "do you think we have money by the bushelful?"

"Skins! skins! who will buy?" he cried again; and every one who asked him the price got his answer, "a

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bushelf of money apiece." "He's making game of us," they cried at last; and the shoemakers took up their straps, and the tanners their leathern aprons, and they gave Big Claus a thorough beating.

"Skiſs! skins!" they called after him, jeeringly; "yes, we'll mark your skin for you; you shall smart for this," and Big Claus had to run for his life; he had never had such a beating since he was born.

"Ah!" he cried, when he got home, "Little Claus shall pay for this. I'll be the death of him, yet."

Now Little Claus's old grandmother lay dead in the house; she had certainly been a very harsh, cruel woman to him, but still he grieved for her loss, and he had laid her in his warm bed to see if that would bring her back to life: there she lay the whole night through while he slept on a chair in the chimney corner as he had done many a time before. As he was sitting there, the door opened and Big Claus came in with his sharp axe; he knew exactly where the bed stood, and he crept up to it and gave the old grandmother a blow on the head with his axe, thinking all the while it was Little Claus.

"Take that!" he cried, "You will never make game of me any more." And he went back to his home.

"Why! he's a downright villain!" said Little Claus. "He actually meant to kill me. It was lucky for my grandmother that she was dead already, for he would have put an end to her life. He dressed his dead grandmother in her Sunday best, borrowed a horse from his neighbour, harnessed it to the trap, placed his grandmother on the back seat, so that she could not fall out, and drove away with her through the wood. By sunrise, they had reached a large inn, where Little Claus pulled up and went in to get something to drink.

The landlord was a good-natured man, and very rich;

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but he was a perfect pepper box for hot temper. "Good morning!" he said to Little Claus; "you're early astir to-day."

"Yes," said Little Claus. "I'm going into the town with my old grandmother; she's sitting outside in the trap; I can't bring her into the room. Will you be so good as to take her a glass of mead from me? You must speak up, for she is rather hard of hearing."

"Here is a glass of mead from your son," shouted the landlord; but the dead woman did not speak a word, and sat quite still.

"Don't you hear?" called the landlord as loud as he could; "here is a glass of mead from your son." He repeated it once more; and then again; and at last, as she never turned or moved, he lost his temper and flung the glass of mead in her face. The old woman fell backward into the cart, for she was only set upright, and had not been tied in her place.

"Hallo!" cried Little Claus, rushing out, and seizing the landlord by the throat, "why you have killed my grandmother! Look, there is a great hole in her forehead!"

"Oh! what a dreadful accident!" cried the landlord, wringing his hands: "that comes from my hot temper. Dear Little Claus! if you will only keep the matter quiet, I will pay you a bushful of gold, and bury your poor grandmother as if she were my own; but if you make it known I shall lose my head, and that *will* be so unpleasant."

So Little Claus received his bushful of gold, and the landlord buried the old grandmother as if she had been his own. As soon as Claus got home with all his money, he sent his boy across to Big Claus to borrow a bushel measure.

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"What's the meaning of that?" cried Big Claus. "Haven't I killed him? I must see into this myself." So he went himself with the bushel to Little Claus. "Well! wherever did you get all this money from?" he said, staring with open eyes at the pile of gold.

"You killed my grandmother instead of me," said Little Claus, "and I have sold her for a bushelful of gold."

"And a good price, too!" said Big Claus. He hurried home, took down an axe and killed his grandmother on the spot. Then he put her in the cart, drove off to the apothecary in the town and asked him if he wanted to buy a dead body.

"Who is it? and how did you come by it?" asked the apothecary.

"It is my grandmother. I've just killed her to get a bushelful of gold for her."

"Heaven preserve us!" cried the apothecary, "you must be raving, don't say such things as that; you'll lose your head for it. And then he tried to explain to him in detail what an awful crime he had committed, and what a wicked man he was, and how he was certain to be punished: all of which frightened Big Claus to that degree that he rushed out of the shop, jumped into the cart, flogged his horse, and galloped home. The apothecary and all the people thought he was out of his mind, so they let him go.

"You shall pay for this," said Big Claus, when he found himself on the turnpike road—"you shall pay for this—Little Claus!" As soon as he reached home he went over to Little Claus and said, "This is the second time you have deceived me. First you made me kill my four horses, and then my grandmother. It is all your fault; but you shall never take me in again."

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Thereupon he seized Little Claus round the body, put him in the sack, lifted the sack on his back, and said "now I'm going straight off to drown you."

He had a long way to go before he reached the river, and Little Claus was not very light to carry. The path lay close to the church where the organ was playing and the choir singing sweetly. Big Claus set down the sack and propped it up against the church door: it would do him no harm he thought to go in and listen to a psalm before he continued his journey. Little Claus could not get out, and every one else was in church; so in he went.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried Little Claus in the sack; he turned and twisted about, but it was no use, he could not open it. Meanwhile a poor old drover came by, a very feeble, white-haired man, with a great stick in his hand: he was driving his herd of cows and oxen before him, when one of them ran against the sack where Little Claus lay and overturned it.

"Oh dear!" sighed Little Claus; "I am so young, and yet I must go to heaven at once!"

"And I, poor creature," said the drover, "I am so old, and yet I cannot get there."

"Open the sack, and get into my place" said Little Claus; "and you will soon be there."

"With all my heart" said the old man, untying the sack, out of which Little Claus struggled nimbly. "You will look after the cattle, won't you?" said the old man, as he crept into the sack. Little Claus tied it up firmly and walked away with the herd of cows.

Big Claus came out soon afterwards and shouldered his sack again; he fancied it was not quite so heavy, for the old drover was not half the weight of Little Claus. "I can carry it quite easily now," he thought

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to himself; "that's because I went in and listened to a psalm." So he went to the river which was broad and deep, threw in the sack with the old drover inside, and called out after him, for he made sure he was speaking to Little Claus, "Now stop where you are; you shall never play off any more tricks on me." He walked homewards, but when he came to the place where the cross roads met, there he saw Little Claus driving his herd of cattle.

"Why what is the meaning of this?" cried Big Claus. "Haven't I drowned you?" "You threw me into the river, about half an hour ago," replied Little Claus.

"Then wherever did you find these splendid cows and oxen?" asked Big Claus.

"They are sea-cattle," said Little Claus. "I will tell you the whole story; I have great cause to be thankful to you, for now that I am on dry land again, I am quite a rich man. I was dreadfully frightened when you put me in the sack, and when the wind whistled through my ears as you threw me off the bridge into the cold water. I sank straight to the bottom at once, but I did not hurt myself, for I fell on the soft rich grass which grows down there. The sack was immediately opened by a beautiful maiden dressed all in white, with a green wreath on her wet hair. She took me by the hand and said, 'Is that you, Little Claus? Here are some cattle for you to begin with: and a mile farther down the road there is a whole flock that I will give you as a present.' I began to see then that the river was as good as a turnpike road to the sea folk. They walk and drive along its bed from the sea to the hill where the river rises far away in the heart of the land. It is a beautiful place down there, full of flowers; the grass is very rich, and the fish swim above you in the water just like the birds in

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the air. The people were very fine-looking, and oh! what famous cattle there were grazing on the hills and in the valleys."

"But why were you in such a hurry to come up here again?" said Big Claus. "I shouldn't have been, if every thing is so beautiful down there."

"Well," said Little Claus, "it was good policy in my case. You heard what I told you about the sea maiden's saying that I should find a herd of sea cattle a mile farther down the road—now by the road she meant the river, for its the only road she can take. But I knew how the river bends and turns, first one way then another, so that it makes it a good piece farther; while by coming up to the land again, and just walking across the fields back to the river, I save almost half the distance and get to my cattle so much the more quickly."

"You *are* a lucky fellow," said Big Claus. "Do you think I should get any sea cattle if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"I think so," said Little Claus; "but I can't carry you in a sack to the river, you're too heavy for me. If you like to walk there yourself, and then get into the sack, I will throw you in with the greatest pleasure."

"Thank you," said Big Claus. "But if I don't have any cattle when I get down there, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life; you may depend upon that."

"No, no! don't be so violent!" said Little Claus. They walked on to the river, and as soon as the thirsty cattle saw the water they ran forward to reach its banks.

"See how eager they are," said Little Claus, "they're in a hurry to get home."

"Yes; but help me first, if you don't want your thrashing," said Big Claus. He then crept into the large sack which was laid across the back of an ox. "Put

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a stone in," he cried; "I'm afraid of not sinking down fast enough."

"Oh, no danger," said Little Claus; but still he did put a large stone in, tied the sack up tightly, and gave it a great push. Splash! went Big Claus into the river, where he sank down like lead.

"I scarcely think he will find his cattle," said Little Claus as he turned homewards with his herd.

The Naughty Boy.



HERE was once an old poet—such a dear, good old poet. One night, he was sitting at home, while the storm raged out of doors, and the heavy rain came pouring down. He sat comfortably by his fireside, the flame leaped merrily, and the rosy apples hissed in the dish, as they lay roasting before the fire.

"The poor creatures out of doors in all this rain will not have a dry thread on them!" he said.

"Oh! let me in; I am cold and wet through," cried a child's voice from without—the voice of a child who stood crying and knocking at the door, while the rain poured down and the windows rattled in the wind.

"Poor little thing!" said the poet, and he got up to open the door. There stood a little boy; he was naked, and the rain streamed from his long fair hair. He was

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trembling with cold, and would certainly have died in the storm if he had not been let in.

"Poor little thing!" cried the old poet, taking him by the hand. "Come here to me, I will soon warm you. You shall have some wine and a roasted apple, for you are a lovely little fellow."

He certainly was. His eyes shone like two clear stars, and although the water was falling from his yellow hair, yet it hung in rich soft curls. He looked like a little angel; but he was white with cold, and trembling from head to foot. In his hand he held a beautiful bow, quite spoiled by the rain; the bright colours on the painted arrows had all run together.

The old man sat down by the fire and lifted the little child on his knee. He pressed the water out of his fair curls, warmed his little hands between his own, and made him some hot spiced wine. Soon the rich colour came back to the pale cheeks; the little one sprang to the ground, and danced round the old man.

"You are merry, little lad," said the poet; "what is your name?"

"My name is Cupid," he answered. "Don't you know me? Here is my bow. I know how to shoot with it, I can tell you. Look! the storm is over now: the moon is shining."

"But your bow is spoilt!" said the old poet.

"That would be a pity," said the little lad, taking it up and looking at it. "No, it is quite dry now; it has taken no harm: the string is tight: I will try it." He bent the bow, took up an arrow, aimed, and shot the good old poet through the heart. "Now you know whether or no my bow is spoilt," he cried, with a laugh, and off he ran.

The naughty boy, to shoot at the good old poet who

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had taken him into his warm room and been so kind to him, giving him hot wine and the best apple !

The old poet lay on the floor and wept ; he was really shot through the heart. " Fie ! " he cried, " what a naughty boy that Cupid is ! I shall tell all good children about him, that they may take care never to play with him, for he will certainly do them some mischief."

All the good children, girls and boys, to whom the poet told this, kept on their guard against Cupid, but it was not of much use ; he was so very cunning. When the students come out of the lecture room, he runs among them with a college cap on and a book under his arm ; they cannot possibly recognize him. So they take his arm thinking he is a student, and he darts the arrow into their heart. He joins the young maidens when they come from their confirmation class ; he runs after everybody. In the theatre he sits in the great chandelier and shines so bright that the people take him for a lamp, but they find out their mistake afterwards. He wanders through the public gardens and the promenades—and once he shot your own father and mother through the heart ! You just ask them, and hear what they will say. Oh ! he is a very naughty boy, this Cupid ! you must never have anything to do with him. He leaves no one in peace. Why, only think, he even shot an arrow at your old grandmother ! . It is long ago : the wound is quite healed now ; but she will never forget it. Fie ! naughty Cupid ! But you have heard all about him now, and know what a naughty boy he is.



The Nightingale.



DARESAY you know that in China the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all the people round him are Chinamen too. Now this happened many years ago—but that is the more reason that the story should be heard before it is forgotten. The Emperor's Palace was built entirely of the finest porcelain, very costly, but so brittle, and so easily cracked, that one had to be careful how one touched it. The garden was rich in wonderful flowers, and round the most beautiful were wreaths of silver bells, which kept ringing lest any one should pass by and forget to look at them. The same admirable study of effect was to be found everywhere, and the garden was so large that even the gardener did not know where it ended. If one did get beyond it, one came out into a beautiful forest with deep lakes and lofty trees. The forest stretched downwards to the sea, which sparkled blue and clear; tall ships could sail up right under the branches of the trees, and among these branches there lived a nightingale. It sang so gloriously that even the poor, hardworked fisherman held his breath to listen when he sailed out by night to lower his nets into the sea. "How beautiful it is!" he thought; and then he was obliged to attend to his work, and forgot all about the bird. But when he came again the next night and the bird sang, he stopped again and said, "how beautiful it is."



"There she is," said the little girl : "listen !"

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Travellers came from every country in the world to admire the Emperor's city, palace, and gardens; but when they heard the nightingale they said, "That is the best of all!"

They spoke of the bird when they returned to their homes, and learned men wrote a great many books about the city and the garden, not forgetting the nightingale, which they placed first of all. And those who could write poetry, wrote the most beautiful verses about the nightingale in the woods by the deep sea.

The books were scattered all over the world, and one day some of them fell into the hands of the Emperor. He sat on his golden throne and read, and read, nodding approval at every page, for he liked reading the glowing descriptions of the city, the garden, and the palace. "But the nightingale is the best of all!" he read out of the book.

"The nightingale!" said the Emperor, "I know of no nightingale. Is there such a bird in my empire, in my Imperial garden indeed? and I never to have heard it! To learn it for the first time out of a book!"

Thereupon he sent for his first lord. This nobleman was so grand, that when any one of lower rank than his own ventured to speak to him, or ask him a question, he merely answered "P," which has no meaning whatever.

"There is said to be a highly remarkable bird here, called the nightingale," said the Emperor. "It is spoken of as the best thing in all my empire. How is it that I have never been told of it?"

"I have never even heard it mentioned," said the nobleman; "it has never been presented at court."

"Let it be brought to sing before me this evening," said the Emperor—"all the world knows better what I possess than I do myself."

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"I never even heard it mentioned before," said the nobleman. "I will look for it and find it."

But where was it to be found! The first lord ran up and down the stairs, through the halls and corridors, but not one of all the people he met had ever heard of the nightingale. The nobleman went back to the Emperor and said that it must certainly be a falsehood on the part of those who wrote the books. "Your Imperial Majesty cannot believe all that is written. The greater part of it is inventions—something that may be termed the black art."

"But the book out of which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent me by my Imperial brother, the Emperor of Japan, and therefore it cannot be false. I will hear the nightingale. Let it be brought here to-night. It has my most gracious favour, and if it is not here, I will have the whole Court trampled under foot immediately after supper."

"Tsing Pe!" cried the first lord, and off he ran again, upstairs and downstairs, and through the halls, and corridors, and half the court ran with him, for nobody wished to be trampled under foot. So there was every one asking about this wonderful nightingale who was known to the whole town, except to those who lived at Court. At last they ran as far as the kitchen, and there they met a poor little scullery-maid who said, "The Nightingale? why I know it quite well! oh, how sweetly it sings. Every evening I get leave to carry what is left from the dinner-table to my poor, sick mother; she lives down by the sea, and when I come back tired out, and sit down to rest in the wood, I often hear the nightingale. The tears come into my eyes at her song, I feel as if my mother kissed me."

"Little scullery maid," said the first lord, "I will

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promote you to a better place in the kitchen, and I will obtain permission for you to look on when the Emperor dines if you can lead us to the nightingale, for she is invited to the palace this evening." They set out together to the wood where the nightingale sang ; half the court followed them, and when they were fairly on their way, a cow began to low.

"Now we've found her," cried one of the court pages ; "what wonderful power for such a little animal ! I fancy I have heard her before."

"No, no ! those are cows lowing," said the little scullery maid, "we are a long way off the place yet."

Some frogs croaked in the marsh. "Beautiful !" cried the court-chaplain, "I hear her distinctly : it sounds like little silver bells."

"Those are frogs," said the little scullery maid, "but I think we shall soon hear her now."

The Nightingale began to sing. "There she is !" cried the little girl : "listen ! listen ! yonder she sits." And she pointed to a small grey bird in the branches overhead.

"Is it possible?" said the first lord ; "I never imagined her like that. How very plain she looks : she must have changed colour on seeing so many people of quality."

"Little Nightingale," cried the scullery maid aloud, "our lord the Emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With all my heart," said the little Nightingale, and sang so that it was a joy to hear her.

"It sounds just like little glass bells," said the first lord. "How her little throat works ! It is most extraordinary that we have never heard her before. She will be an immense success at Court."

"Shall I sing again for the Emperor ?" said the little

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nightingale, who thought the Emperor was one of the group.

"My adorable little Nightingale," said the first lord, "I have the great pleasure of inviting you to the Court festival this evening, where you may enchant His Imperial Highness with your charming song."

"I sing better out in the woods," said the Nightingale, but she came at once when she heard the Emperor wished it.

The palace was splendidly decorated, the porcelain walls and floors glittered in the light of myriad golden lamps ; splendid flowers with their chimes of silver bells were placed in the corridors. There was such a hurry and draught, and ringing of bells, that one could scarcely hear one's own voice.

In the midst of the great hall where the Emperor sat on his throne was a golden perch set up for the nightingale.

The whole Court was there, and the little scullery maid had leave to stand behind the door, since she had been granted the title of Cook to the Imperial Court. All were in full dress and every eye was turned towards the little grey bird. The Emperor nodded, and the nightingale began her song. She sang so gloriously that tears rose in the Emperor's eyes and rolled down his cheeks ; then she sang more sweetly still, and her voice thrilled every heart. The Emperor was so delighted that he said the nightingale should wear his golden slipper round her neck ; but she thanked him, and said she was already sufficiently rewarded.

"I have seen tears in my Emperor's eyes, and that is my great reward. An Emperor's tears have special power. Heaven knows I am repaid." And she sang once more with her sweet, lovely voice.

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"That is the most charming flattery I have ever heard," said the ladies standing round; and they all held water in their mouths that they might gurgle when they spoke to any one. They thought they were nightingales then. Nay; even the lacqueys and ladies maids gave out that they were satisfied, and that is saying a great deal, for they are the hardest of all to please. In short, the Nightingale was a decided success.

She was obliged to live at court now; she had her own cage and the privilege of walking out twice a day and once at night. Twelve servants attended her, and each of them held a silk ribbon which was fastened round her leg. There was not much pleasure in such flying about as that.

The whole town was talking of the wonderful bird, and when two people met one of them was sure to say "Night——" and the other to answer "ingale."* And then they would sigh and understand each other. And eleven pedler's children were named after her, but not one of them had a good note in his voice.

One day the Emperor received a large parcel, on which was written—"The Nightingale." "This must be a new book about our famous bird," said the Emperor. But it was not a book; it was a little mechanical toy in a box, an artificial nightingale, made like the living bird but set with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. When it was wound up it sang one of the very songs which the real nightingale sung, moving its tail up and down in time to the music, and sparkling with gold and silver. Round its neck was a ribbon with

* There is a play upon words here, in the original Danish, the last syllable of nightingale meaning *mad*.

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the inscription, "The Emperor of Japan's Nightingale is nothing compared to the Emperor of China's."

"How exquisite!" cried all the court; and the messenger who had brought the bird received at once the title of "Imperial Chief Nightingale Bringer."

"Now they shall sing together: what a duet that will be!" So they were set to sing together, but it was not a success, for the real nightingale sang in her own way, and the artificial one knew nothing but waltzes. "This one is not in fault," said the conductor; "it keeps excellent time, quite according to my own method." Then the artificial bird was made to sing alone. It was just as great a success as the real one; besides being much prettier to look at, for it sparkled like bracelets and diamond brooches.

Thirty-three times it sang all through the same piece, and was not tired then. The audience would have liked to hear it again, but the Emperor said it was the real nightingale's turn now. But where was she? No one had noticed that she had flown away through the open window to her own green woods.

"Why, how is that?" cried the Emperor, and all the courtiers blamed her severely, and called her a most ungrateful bird. "However, the best is left," they said, and then they made the artificial bird sing again: that was the thirty-fourth time they heard the same song. They did not know it by heart yet, for all that—it was so very difficult. The conductor praised the bird most highly; he maintained that it was better than a real nightingale, not only on account of its golden plumage and valuable jewels, but of its musical talent. "For consider your Imperial Majesty and your Excellencies, with the real bird one never knows what is coming next, while with this one all is according to rule. It

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can be explained, opened, and shown to all men how the waltzes are arranged, and which comes after the other."

"That is just what we think," said the courtiers, and the conductor obtained permission to exhibit the bird to the people on the following Sunday. The Emperor gave orders that they should hear it sing; they did so, and were so enraptured with it, that they felt as if they were intoxicated with tea-drinking according to the Chinese fashion. "Oh—h!" they all cried, holding up their forefingers and nodding to the tunes. But the poor fisherman who had heard the real nightingale, said, "it sounds very pretty, and the tunes are like too: but there is something wanting; I don't know exactly what it is."

The real nightingale was banished from the Imperial realm.

The artificial bird was given a place on the silken cushions by the Emperor's bedside; all the presents of gold and jewels which it received lay round it, and it held the title of "Chief Singer of the Imperial Bed-chamber—class one, on the left side," for the Emperor considered that the most honourable side where the heart was; and even an Emperor has his heart on the left side. The conductor wrote a work in twenty-five volumes about the artificial nightingale; the book was so long, so learned, so full of the hardest Chinese words, that every one said he had read it and understood it, lest he should be considered stupid, and perhaps trampled under foot.

A year passed away. The Emperor, the courtiers, and all the people knew every trill in the nightingale's song by heart. They liked it all the better for that, because now they could sing with it. The very street

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boys sang, " Zoo—zoo—zoo ! gluk—gluk—gluk ! " and so did the Emperor himself. It was delightful.

But one night when the nightingale was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird went snap ; there was another catch. Whir-r-r-r-r it went ! The wheels ran down ; the music stopped.

The Emperor sprang out of bed, and summoned his physician-in-ordinary, but what could *he* do ? Then they sent for the clockmaker, and after a great deal of consulting and examination, he set the bird to rights for a time. But he said it must be used very carefully. The stops were almost worn out, and it would be impossible to put in new ones without spoiling the music. There was great consternation at Court. The bird was only allowed to be heard once a year, and sometimes that seemed almost too much for it. The conductor would then make a short speech full of high flown words, to prove that it was just as good as before : and so of course it was just as good as before.

Five years passed away and a great trouble fell on the land.

The Chinamen were really attached to their Emperor, and now he lay ill, and was, so people said, at the point of death. A new Emperor was already chosen, and the crowd stood out in the street asking the first lord how the sick Emperor was.

" P ! P ! " he exclaimed, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his large state bed ; the courtiers thought that he was dead, and every one hastened away to greet the new sovereign. The servants ran out to talk over the news, and the ladies'-maids had a great tea-party downstairs. Cloth was laid down in all the passages, so as to muffle every footfall, and the

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silence was unbroken. The Emperor was not dead; he lay stiff and white on the bed, with the heavy velvet curtains and the golden tassels; before him, through the window, the moon shone down upon his face, and upon the golden bird.

He could scarcely breathe; he felt as if something were sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes, and found that it was Death who sat there, wearing his royal crown, and holding in one hand the Emperor's sabre, in the other his embroidered banner. All around ghostly faces looked out from the folds of the velvet curtains; some were hideous, some mild and kindly. These were the Emperor's good and evil deeds which looked him in the face, while death sat heavy on his heart.

"Do you remember me?" "do you remember me?" they asked, one after the other; and as they spoke the cold perspiration stood on the Emperor's brow.

"I never knew it!" he cried; "Music! music! sound the drums and gongs to drown their voices!"

But they went on speaking, and Death nodded grimly at every word.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor; "you little golden bird sing to me now! I have loaded you with jewels and presents; I have hung my golden slipper round your neck. Sing to me now!"

But the bird was silent. There was no one there to wind it up; it could not sing without that; and Death kept staring at the Emperor with his hollow eyes through the dreadful stillness.

Suddenly a burst of song trilled from the open window—it was the living nightingale who sat outside on the branch of a tree. She had heard of the Emperor's need, and was come to sing of hope and consolation; as she sang the spectre faces faded; the blood ran more freely

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through the sick man's feeble limbs, and Death himself listened, and said, "Sing on, little Nightingale! sing on!"

"Will you give me that beautiful sabre, and the silken banner, and the Emperor's crown?"

Death gave up each one in exchange for a song, and the nightingale still went on singing. She sang of the quiet churchyard, where white roses grow, where the elder-flowers blossom, and the grass is wet with mourners' tears. A longing for his peaceful garden stole over Death as she sang and he floated away out of the open window like a cold white mist.

"Thanks!" cried the Emperor; "you bird of heaven! I know you now. I drove you from my land, and you have driven evil visions from my bed, and death from my heart. How can I repay you?"

"I am repaid," said the nightingale. "I drew tears from your eyes when I first sang to you. I shall never forget it; those are the jewels that rejoice a singer's heart. But sleep now, and grow strong and well; I will sing you a lullaby."

She sang, and the Emperor fell into a deep sleep, mild and refreshing. The sun was shining through his windows as he woke, strengthened and restored: none of his servants had returned, for they believed him dead; but the nightingale was still singing.

"Do not leave me again," said the Emperor; "you shall only sing when you please, and I will break the golden bird in a thousand pieces."

"Not so," said the nightingale; "it served you as long as it could: keep it here still. I cannot build my nest here in the palace. Let me come and go as I will. In the evenings I will sit in this spray, and sing to you till you are glad and thoughtful all in one. I will sing

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of the happy and the suffering, of the good and evil, that lie hidden around you. The little singing-bird flies far and wide, away from the palace, to the hut of the poor fisherman, and the peasant's cottage. I love your heart more than your crown, though the crown has a glory and sacredness of its own. I will come and sing to you ; but you must promise me one thing."

"Everything !" cried the Emperor. He stood dressed now in his imperial robes, with the heavy golden sword at his side.

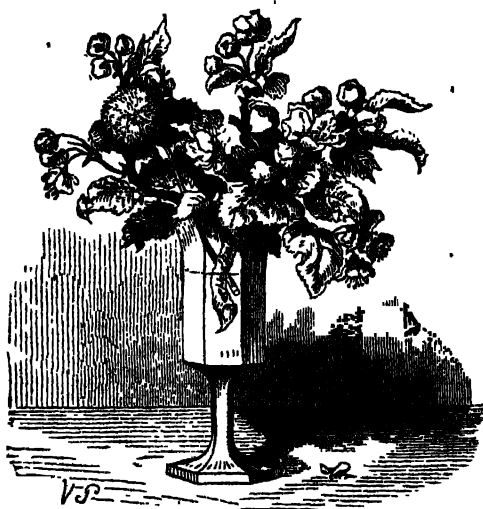
"Only one thing. Let no one know you have a little bird who tells you everything: it will be much better not."

The nightingale flew away.

In came the servants to look on their dead Emperor. They stood still in amazement.

The Emperor said "Good morning !"





“There is a Difference!”



It was the month of May. A cold wind blew; but every tree and shrub, field and woodland, said, “The spring is here!” Flowers in myriads bloomed in the quickset hedgerows: the Spring himself was busy among them, breathing down from a little apple-tree, where one lovely branch, heavy with rosy buds, was on the point of bursting into blossom. It knew well how lovely it was, for that knowledge comes soon, to heart and leaf alike; so it was not very much surprised when a splendid carriage

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drew up before it, and the young Countess said that an apple-blossom was the loveliest thing in all the world—the sweetest revelation of the springtide! The branch was broken off, and the Countess held it in her delicate hand, and shaded it with her silken parasol. Away rolled the carriage to the Castle, and the apple-blossom was carried through splendid halls and lofty rooms, where white curtains draped the windows, and rare transparent vases stood filled with lovely flowers. Into a vase that looked as if it had been carved out of new-fallen snow, they placed the branch of apple-blossom; it was a pleasure only to see it.

Then it grew proud, and that is human, too.

Different kinds of people passed through the chamber, and each expressed his admiration according to his rank. Some said nothing, some said too much, and the apple-tree began to understand that there is a difference among plants and among people.

“Some are born for show, and some for use, and some could be dispensed with altogether,” thought the apple-blossom.

It stood close to the open window, and could look out over garden and meadow where there were flowers and herbs in plenty to think about, rich and poor together—some, indeed, quite destitute.

“Poor outcast herbs!” thought the apple-blossom; “there is certainly a difference. How unhappy they must feel, if, indeed, that class *can* feel in the way such as we do: there is *certainly* a difference, and very properly so, for otherwise we should be all equal.”

And the apple-blossom looked down with a kind of pity on one flower especially, which covered the field by thousands. No ribbon tied it in a nosegay; it was left to grow on walls, and crop up through the very paving-

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stones, like a mere weed; its very name was ugly—Dandelion!

"Poor despised herb!" cried the apple-blossom; "it cannot help the ugly name it bears. But it is the same with plants as with men; there must be a difference."

"Difference!" cried the sunbeam, as she kissed the blooming apple-blossom, and kissed, too, the dandelion out in the field, kissed all the children of the sunlight—rich as well as poor. The apple-blossom had never pondered over God's endless love to all that breathes and lives in Him, or thought how much good and beauty lies around hidden but not forgotten—and that was human too.

The sunbeam, child of light, knew better.

"You cannot see far or clearly. Which is the despised herb you are pitying?"

"The dandelion," said the apple-blossom; "it is never tied in a nosegay, it is trodden under foot; there are too many of them, and when they run to seed they are scattered all over the ground like bits of wool, and stick to people's clothes. It is a weed, and it is meant to be so; I am truly thankful that I am not one of them."

A troop of children came running over the field—one a mere baby, carried by the others in turn. As soon as it saw the yellow flowers in the valley, it crowed for joy, plunged with its little legs, picked off the blossoms, and kissed them in its sweet innocence. The bigger children plucked them more carefully, and twisted them into chains—one for the neck, one to throw over the shoulders, one for the waist, one for the head, and one more to keep them all in place—till there was a perfect blaze of yellow and green. But the eldest children chose the ripened flowers, with their feathery crown—

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the beautiful silvery ball of trembling wool, a masterpiece carved in down. This they held to their young lips, and whoever could blow it all away at one breath would have a new dress that same year—grandmother said so!

The despised flower was a prophet, then?

"Do you see?" whispered the sunbeam; "do you see its beauty and its power?"

"Yes—for children," answered the apple-blossom.

An old woman came into the field. She dug up the roots of the plant with her blunt old knife, and pulled them out: some she wanted for herb-tea, and the rest she meant to sell to the apothecary.

"But beauty is higher still," said the apple-blossom; "only the elect enter the kingdom of beauty. There is a difference among plants as there is among people."

The sunbeam spoke of God's eternal love revealed in creation, and of the even distribution of all things in time and in eternity.

"Yes; that is your opinion," said the apple-blossom.

The door opened; the young Countess, followed by her friends, came into the room; she held in her hands something that might be a beautiful flower, but it was covered by three or four large leaves, lest a breath of wind should injure it, and it was carried much more carefully than the apple-blossom had been.

Slowly the great leaves were removed, and behold there stood the delicate feathery seed-crown of the despised dandelion! That was it which she had gathered and carried so tenderly lest one of the little feather arrows should blow away from its vapoury ball. She held it up lovingly, and praised its perfect form, its airy-lightness, its graceful movement.


"Look, how beautiful God has made it!" she cried;

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"I will paint it in a group with that lovely apple-blossom ; different as they are, they are both children in the kingdom of the beautiful."

The sunbeam kissed the poor flower, and the radiant apple-blossom, which blushed all over its delicate buds.

The Garden of Paradise.

 HERE was once a king's son who had more books than anyone else in the world. He could read in them about all that had ever taken place since the creation, and there were beautiful copper-plate engravings. There was not a place, or a nation about which they had not something to tell him—only they did not say a single word about the Garden of Paradise, and that was the very thing the prince cared for more than all.

His grandmother had told him when he was quite little, and was just going to be sent to school, that every flower in the Garden of Paradise was made of sweet cakes, and their stamens filled with delicious wine ; on one flower was written history, on another geography, or tables—you had only to eat your cake and you knew your lesson—the more cake you ate, the more history, geography, and tables you knew.

He believed it all then ; but as he grew bigger and wiser, and knew more, he understood that the glory of the Garden of Paradise must be a very different thing from that.

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"Oh, why did Eve take the fruit of the tree of knowledge? Why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit? Had I been there it would not have happened—sin would have never entered the world."

That was what he used to say; and he said it now that he was seventeen years old. The Garden of Paradise filled all his thoughts. One day he was walking alone through the wood; it was his greatest pleasure.

Evening came on, and the clouds threatened tempest. The rain poured down as if the floodgates of heaven were opened; it was as dark as in the deepest well by blackest night. The prince slipped on the wet grass, and over the smooth stones that lay in the rocky valley. Everything was dripping with water, there was not a dry thread left on him. He climbed over the great blocks of stone, pressing the water out of the wet moss; he felt faint and giddy. Suddenly he heard a strange sighing sound, and he saw before him a large hollow cavern. In the midst of the cave was a fire large enough to roast a stag, and a stag was actually roasting on a spit before it, its splendid antlers turning slowly round between two mighty pine stems. An elderly woman, tall, and broad-shouldered, looking like a man in disguise, sat by the fireside, and threw one log after another on to the blazing pile.

"Come in," she cried; "sit down by the fire and dry your clothes." "The fire draws well," said the prince, as he sat down on the ground.

"It will draw better soon when my sons come home," said the woman. "You are in the cavern of the four winds, and my sons are the four winds. Can you make it out?"

"Where are your sons?" asked the prince.

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"It is a difficult thing to answer a stupid question," said the woman. "My sons act for themselves; they are playing at battledoor and shuttlecock with the clouds up yonder in the king's hall." And she pointed to the sky.

"Oh, indeed!" said the prince. "You speak rather roughly, and do not seem quite so gentle as the ladies I am accustomed to meet."

"I daresay they've nothing else to do. I'm obliged to be rough, if I want to keep my sons in order. I manage it though, headstrong as they are. Do you see this sack hanging up by the wall? They are as afraid of that sack as you used to be of the birch-rod behind the door. I can manage them I promise you. I clap them into the sack without more ado, and there they are, and can't get out again until I think fit. But here comes one of them."

It was the north wind, who came in bringing an icy chill, great hailstones rattled to the ground, and snow-flakes floated round him. He was dressed in bearskin coat and trousers; a sealskin cap was drawn over his ears; long icicles hung from his beard, and one hailstone after another fell from the collar of his coat.

"Don't go too near the fire," cried the prince, "your face and hands might be frozen."

"Frozen!" said the north wind, with a loud laugh; "cold is my greatest enjoyment; why, what dapper little fellow are you? How did you come into the Cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," said the old woman; "and if that explanation doesn't satisfy you, you can go in the sack, do you hear that?"

That took effect; and the north wind began to talk of all the places where he had been in the last month.

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"I'm come from the Polar seas," he said; "I've been staying on Bear's Island with the Russian walrus hunters; I sat and slept at the helm when they sailed from the North Cape; and whenever I woke up, the stormy petrel flew round my feet. He's a comical little bird! He gives one good stroke with his wings, then holds them spread wide and motionless, and off he flies."

"Keep to the point," said the mother of the winds. "You were on Bear's Island."

"It's a nice place, that is. There's a floor to dance on, flat as a plate! Half-thawed snow, a little moss, sharp stones, and skeletons of walrus, and polar bears lie strewn about, like gigantic arms and legs green with decay. You would think the sun never shone there. I blew away a little of the mist so that they could see the little hut that had been built out of a wreck and covered with walrus skin, the fleshy side turned upwards; on the roof was a polar bear, growling savagely. Then I flew down to the shore to look after the bird's nest. I saw the unfledged young ones chirping and opening their bills, so I blew down all their thousand throats and taught them to keep their mouths shut. Out at sea tumbled and rolled the walrus like gigantic worms, with pigs' heads, and teeth a yard long."

"You describe prettily, my lad," said his mother; "my mouth waters while I listen."

"The hunting began then. The harpoon was plunged into the walrus, and the hot blood-stream shot up high in the air, and stained the snow. Then I thought of my own sport. I blew away my fleet of towering icebergs, and they closed round the Russian whaler. How they whistled and shouted—but I whistled loudest. Chests, and tackle, and the dead walrus were thrown

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overboard on to the ice; I showered down snowflakes over them, and let the ice-bound vessel and its spoil drift southward, to taste salt water. They will come no more to Bear's Island!"

"Then you have done harm!" said the mother of the winds.

"Other folk may tell the good I do," he answered. "But here comes my brother from the west; I love him best, for he smells of the sea and brings a fresh breeze with him."

"Is that the gentle Zephyr?" asked the prince.

"It certainly is the Zephyr; but he is no longer gentle. Years ago he was a pretty boy, but he has lost his good looks."

He looked a wild fellow enough; he wore a slouched hat to shade his face, and carried a heavy mahogany club cut from the American forests. It was no trifle to carry.

"Where do you come from?" said his mother.

"From the back woods," he answered, "from the swamps where the water snake lies in the wet grass, and there is no need of human beings."

"What have you been doing there?"

"I watched the mighty river fall from the rocks in clouds of spray and fly towards the clouds to meet the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo struggling in the waves but the current bore him on—he followed the flight of the wild ducks in the sky above—both made for the cataract. The buffalo was whirled over; that pleased me, and I raised a storm that splintered the lofty trees to shavings."

"And is that all you have done?" said the old woman.

"I have turned somersaults in the savannahs;

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stroked the wild horses, and shaken down the cocoanuts. Yes: yes. I could tell plenty of tales—but one must not tell all one knows. You know that yourself, old mother!" And he kissed her so roughly that she was almost knocked over. He was a dreadfully wild fellow.

Then came in the south wind, wearing a turban and a flowing burnous.

"It's very cold here," he said, throwing more wood on to the fire; "it's easy to see that the north wind reached home first."

"It's hot enough to roast a polar bear," said the north wind.

"You're a polar bear yourself!" said his brother.

"Do you want to go into the sack?" said the old woman. "Sit down on that stone and give an account of yourself."

"I've been in Africa, mother," he answered. "I've been lion hunting with the Hottentots in Caffre land. The grass grows green as olives in the valleys. The ostrich raced me but I outstripped him easily. Then I reached the desert—a plain of yellow sand like the bed of the sea. I met a caravan: they had killed the last camel to find water, and had found scarcely any: the sun was burning over head on the sand below. The desert stretched out endless as the sea. Then I stirred up the dry loose sand in whirling columns. That was a rare dance! You should have seen how helpless the dromedary stood, how the merchant hid his face in the folds of his caftan, and prostrated himself before me, as before Allah his god. They are buried now; a pyramid of sand stands over them. If ever I blow it away, the sun will bleach the white bones, and travellers will see that men have been there before

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them: or else they would never believe that in the desert.

"You have done nothing but mischief, then," said his mother—"into the sack with you," and before he had time to move she seized him round his body and pushed him in the sack. He rolled about on the floor, but she sat down upon it, and he was obliged to be still.

"They are a lively set of boys," said the prince.

"That they are," she answered: "but I can keep them in order. Here comes the fourth."

That was the east wind, who came in dressed like a Chinaman. "Oh! you come from over there do you?" said his mother: "I thought you had been to the Garden of Paradise."

"I don't go there till to-morrow," said the east wind—"to-morrow it will be a hundred years since I was there before. I am come straight from China where I've been dancing on the porcelain steeples till the bells rang again. The government officials were all bastinadoed in the streets, the bamboo cane was broken over their shoulders: and yet they were people of the first to the ninth grade. They all cried, 'Thanks! oh fatherly benefactor!' but it did not seem to come from their heart, and I set all my bells going 'ring-a-ting-ting-a-ting-ting.'"

"You are growing obstreperous," said his mother: "it's a good thing you're going to the Garden of Paradise to-morrow; that always helps to form your manners. Drink deep of the fount of wisdom and bring me a bottle full home."

"I will," said the east wind; "but why have you put my brother from the south in the sack? Let him out. He must tell me about the phoenix; the princess in the Garden of Paradise is always anxious to hear

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about him when I pay her my visit once in a hundred years. Open the sack, mother darling! I've brought you two bags of tea, as fresh and green as when I gathered it from the place where it grew."

"Well! for the tea's sake, and because you were always my favourite boy, I will open the sack." She did so, and the south wind crept out; but he was very crestfallen because the prince had seen it all.

"Here is a palm leaf for the princess," said the south wind: "it was given me by the phoenix himself. He has written on it with his beak his whole life story—the story of a hundred years. She can read it for herself how he set fire to his nest, and sat in it as it burnt away—like the widow of a Hindoo prince. How the dry twigs crackled, and the smoke rose up! At last all broke out into flames; the old phoenix burnt to ashes, but his egg lay glowing red in the blaze; it burst with a loud crack, and out flew the young bird—the king of all the birds—the only phoenix in the world. Look! he has bitten this hole in the leaf—it is his greeting to the princess."

"Let us have some supper now," said the mother of the winds. All sat down to partake of the roast venison; the prince sat by the east wind, and they soon made friends with each other. "Tell me," said the prince, "what kind of a princess is the one you talk so much about? and where is the Garden of Paradise?"

"Oh, ho!" said the east wind, "do you want to go there? Come with me to-morrow. But I must tell you that no human being has ever been there since the days of Adam and Eve. You know your Scripture History, I suppose?"

"Of course," said the prince.

"When they were driven out, the Garden of Paradise

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sunk in the earth, with all its pleasant sunshine, sort air, and loveliness. The fairy queen lives there, and there lie the Fortunate Isles where death cannot come. It is beautiful there. Get on my back to-morrow, and I will take you with me: I think it can be managed. But don't say another word now, for I am sleepy."

And all of them lay down to sleep.

Towards early dawn the prince awoke and was not a little surprised to find himself high above the clouds. He was sitting on the back of the east wind, who held him tight; and they were so high in the air that the earth, with its woods and plains, rivers and seas, lay below them like a map. "Good morning," said the east wind; "you can sleep a little longer if you like, for there is not much to be seen about here, unless you are to count the churches: they look like chalk dots on green board." By the green board he meant fields and meadows. "It was not polite to leave your mother and your brothers without saying good-bye," said the prince.

"One is excused all that when one is asleep," answered the east wind. On they flew, faster still; you could hear it in the tops of the trees as they rushed by, you could hear it on the seas, for the waves ran higher and the tall ships bent down to meet the water like stately swans.

The great towns looked beautiful beneath their feet when the night drew on; lights flashed out here and there as the sparks brighten and die out in lighted paper. The prince clapped his hands, but the east wind begged him not to do that again, and to hold tighter if he did not wish to fall off and be found hanging to some church steeple,

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The eagle flies fast through the dark forests, but the east wind flew faster still; the Cossack scours the plain on his little horse, but the prince rode more swiftly than he. .

"Now you can see the Himalayas—the highest mountains in Asia: we shall soon reach the Garden of Paradise: they turned southward; the scent of spices and flowers rose to meet them, figs and pomegranates grew wild, purple and deep red grapes hung on the vine branches. Here they rested awhile on the rich grass; the flowers bowed before the wind as if in welcome.

"Now are we in the Garden of Paradise?" asked the prince.

"Nothing like it," replied the east wind; "but we shall soon be there."

"Do you see that wall of rock over there, and the cavern mouth where the wild vine hangs like a green curtain? That is the way we must take. Draw your mantle round you: it is burning hot here, but a step farther and it will be cold as ice. The bird who flies by the cave feels one wing warm as summer and the other cold as winter."

"So that is the way to the Garden of Paradise?" said the prince. They entered the cave. It was icy cold, but not for long. The east wind spread out his wings, and they shone like living flame. What a cave it was! Great blocks of stone, from which the water trickled down, hung over them in fantastic shapes. Now it was so narrow that they were forced to crawl along on their hands and knees, and then it would widen out broad as the sky. It looked like a chapel for the dead, with its silent organ frozen into stone.

"We pass, then, through the gate of death to the

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Garden of Paradise?" said the prince. The east wind did not answer: he pointed onward to a lovely blue gleam which shone before them. The granite blocks softened to mist and looked at last like a white cloud in the moonlight. The air was fresh and mild, bracing as on the mountain height, and soft as among the roses in the valley. A river clear as the air itself flowed by: in it were gold and silver fish, purple eels that shot out sparks of blue fire, and the leaves of great water-lilies glanced with every colour of the rainbow: the flower itself was a brilliant orange, fed by the water as oil feeds a lamp. A bridge of marble, solid, but so finely carved that it looked like a dream of lace and crystal, crossed from the river to the Fortunate Isles and the Garden of Paradise.

The east wind carried the prince over in his arms. The flowers and leaves were singing the loveliest songs of his childhood, but more sweetly than any human voice can sing them.

Were they palm trees or gigantic water plants that grew round them? The prince had never seen such tall and stately trees, wonderful climbing plants hung down in graceful garlands, such as one sees painted in gold and colours on the margin, and clinging round the initial letters of old missals. Strange combinations of tendrils, flowers, and birds. On the turf near, was a flock of peacocks with glittering outspread tails, but when the prince touched them he found that they were plants not birds—great fairy clover blossoms that glittered like a peacock's tail. Lions and tigers sprang nimbly as cats over the green hedgerows, fragrant as the flowers of the olive tree, and both lions and tigers were quite tame. The wild wood-pigeon fluttered her soft wings on the lion's mane, and the timid antelope stood

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by and nodded its head as if it wanted to join in the play.

Then came up the fairy of the garden: her dress glittered like the sun, and her face was bright as the face of a happy mother proud of her child. She was young and beautiful; and twelve fair maidens followed her, each wearing a shining star in her hair. The east wind gave the palm leaf from the phoenix to the princess, and her eyes sparkled with joy. She took the prince by the hand, and led him into her palace, where the walls glowed with the colours of a tulip leaf when one holds it up against the sunlight. The ceiling was one great flower, and the longer one looked at it the deeper its cup seemed to be. The prince went to the window and looked through one of the panes: he saw before him the tree of knowledge and the serpent, Adam and Eve were standing by. "Are they not driven away?" he cried. The fairy laughed and told him that time had painted a picture on every pane; not such as one generally sees, but living pictures where the leaves of the trees moved, and people went and came, as if one looked into a mirror. He looked through another pane, and there was Jacob's dream, the ladder set up to heaven from earth, and angels with great white wings passing up and down. All that had happened in the world, lived and moved on the glass window panes. Those are the pictures time can paint.

The fairy smiled, and led him into a large high chamber with transparent walls. Here were millions of portraits, each face lovelier than the last; faces happy that smiled and sang a sweet melody; the highest were as small as tiny rosebuds painted on paper as a mere dot. In the midst of the chamber was a tall tree with luxuriant hanging branches, golden apples, bright

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as oranges, hung between the green leaves. It was the tree of knowledge from which Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit. From every leaf there fell a drop of dew—bright, red, and sparkling. It was as if the tree wept tears of blood.

"Let us go in the boat," said the fairy, "and refresh ourselves on the clear water. The boat rocks, but it does not leave the spot; the countries of the world pass before us as we sit. And it was wonderful to see how the whole coast moved round. First came the high, snow covered alps, with clouds and dusky pine woods; the horn sounded plaintively, and the shepherd's *jödeln* were heard below in the valley. Then tall bananas waved their drooping branches over the boat, black swans swam on the water, and strange beasts and flowers appeared on the shore. That was New Holland, the fifth continent which glided by, giving a distant view of the blue mountains. The wild song of the priests arose, and the war dance of the savages was seen, led by the sound of drums and the clang of the bone trumpets. The pyramids of Egypt, towering to the clouds amid fallen columns and sphynxes half buried in the sand, sailed slowly by. The northern lights flamed high above the burnt out volcanoes of the north: a firework such as is seen no where else. The prince was happier than he had ever been before: he saw a hundred times more than we can tell here.

"May I always stay here?" he asked.

"It depends upon yourself," said the fairy. "If you are not enticed too what is forbidden, as Adam was, you may."

"I will not touch the fruits of the tree of knowledge," said the prince. "There are thousands of fruits here as fair as that."

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"Prove yourself : and if you are afraid, go back with the East-wind who brought you hither. He is about to fly home now, and will not be seen here again for a hundred years ; the time will seem to you like a hundred hours, but it is a long time to be tempted. Every evening when I leave you I must say to you 'Come with me.' I must beckon with my hand ; but do not follow, for with every step your longing will grow stronger. You will come into the room where the tree of knowledge stands ; I sleep under its sweet-scented branches—you will bend over me, and I must smile : but if you press a kiss upon my lips the Garden of Paradise will sink into the earth and be lost to you for ever. The keen wind of the desert will whistle round you, and cold rain will fall upon your head ; care and sorrow will be your lot."

"I will stay," said the prince.

The East-wind kissed him on the forehead, and said, "Be strong ! in a hundred years we meet again. Farewell !" And he spread out his broad wings that shone like summer lightning at harvest time, or the Northern lights in winter.

Farewell, farewell ! re-echoed from flower and tree. Flocks of storks and pelicans accompanied him to the boundary of the garden.

"Now we begin our dances," said the fairy. "When I dance the last dance with you at sunset, you will see me beckon you and hear me say come with me, but do not listen. I must do this every night through the hundred years ; every time you resist you will gain fresh strength, and at last you will not even heed me. To-night is the first time and I have warned you."

The fairy led him into a hall of white, transparent tiles ; the stamens in each cup formed a little golden

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harp that rang out in flute-like tones. The loveliest maidens, graceful and slender, their fair forms half veiled in flowing drapery circled in the dance, and sang of the bliss of life, and that the Garden of Paradise would bloom for ever. The sun set, the whole heaven turned to gold, and lent to the lilies the loveliest rose light. The prince drank the sparkling wine which the maidens offered him, and felt a happiness which he had never known before. He saw how the background of the room opened and showed him the tree of knowledge standing in a blinding glory ; songs were heard, soft and loving as his mother's voice, when she called him her dear, dearest child.

Then the fairy beckoned him tenderly, "Come with me," she cried.

The prince rushed towards her, forgot his promise, forgot it even this first night, and the fairy smiled and beckoned. The rich fragrance round grew stronger, the harps rang out more sweetly ; it seemed as if the myriad faces round the tree of knowledge cried out, "Man must know all things—man is the lord of the world !" And now he saw no blood-red tears, but only sparkling, rose-lit stars falling from the glittering leaves. "Come with me," pleaded the thrilling tones. At every step his cheeks burnt more hotly and his blood rushed faster through his veins. "I must go," he cried : "it is not—cannot be a sin. Why may I not follow joy and beauty ? I will look on her as she sleeps. Nothing is lost if only I do not kiss her lips. And I will not. My will is firm and strong."

The fairy laid aside her gleaming robe and vanished under the hanging boughs.

"I have not sinned yet," said the prince. "I will not sin." He parted the branches ; she was already

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sleeping ; beautiful with all the beauty of Paradise. She smiled in her dream : he bent over her and on her silken lashes he saw a tear.

"Do you weep for me ?" he whispered. "Weep not for me beloved. Now for the first time I feel the joy of Paradise. It fills my blood—my heart. I feel in my earthly body the strength of angels and the power of eternal life. Let it be night for me for ever : one moment like this is joy enough." And he kissed the tears from her eyes, and pressed his lips to hers.

Then came a clap of thunder, louder and more awful than can be heard on earth. All fell in ruins round him by the lovely fairy ; the fair, sweet garden sank deep, deep into the gloomy night. The prince saw it sinking down like a falling star to the far, far distance. The cold of death benumbed his limbs ; he closed his eyes and lay unconscious. An icy cold rain lashed his face, keen wind blew round him, and his senses returned. "What have I done ?" he cried. "I, too, have sinned as Adam sinned—and Paradise is lost. He opened his eyes ; a star that shone like his lost Paradise was yet before him in the heavens. It was the morning-star.

He rose, and found himself in the forest close to the Cavern of the Winds ; the mother of the Winds sat by him ; she looked angry and raised her arm in the air.

"The very first night !" she cried, "I thought as much ! If you were my son you would go in the sack."

"And so he will," said Death ; the tall old man with great black wings, a scythe in his right hand. "Into the sack he shall go—but not yet. My mark is on him. Let him wander awhile in the world, and repent of his sin, and learn to grow better. When he least expects it, I shall come ; put him in the black coffin and fly with him to yonder star. There too, he will find the

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Garden of Paradise, and if he is worthy he may enter in; but if his thoughts are evil, and his heart full of sin, he will sink in his coffin deeper than Paradise has sunk, and I shall only fetch him back once in a thousand years that he may sink deeper still, or reach at last the golden star above."



It is Quite True.



"T'S a dreadful story!" said a hen; she did not live in that quarter of the town where the affair had happened. "Such a terrible scandal in the henroost! I dare not sleep by myself to-night. It's a good thing there are so many of us on one perch," and then she began to tell what had happened, till the

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feathers of the other hens stood on end, and the cock's comb fell down flat. It's quite true.

But we will begin at the beginning, and we shall find that in another henroost, in a different part of the town, the sun was setting, and the hens were going to roost, when a white hen, a short-legged, motherly, highly respectable hen, who laid her eggs regularly, gave herself a little peck as she flew up on to the perch, and a small white feather fell out.

"There it goes!" she said, merrily, for she was always full of fun; "the more I peck myself, the handsomer I grow." She liked a joke, though, as we said before, she was eminently respectable; and then she went to sleep.

It grew dark; hen sat by hen; but the one who sat next to the white hen could not sleep; she listened, and heard nothing, as one ought to do if one wishes for a quiet life in the world. But no; she must repeat it all to her next neighbour. "Did you hear what was said just now?" she whispered. "There is a hen here, who pecks herself to improve her appearance! If I were a cock, I should despise her."

Just above the hens, the owl sat with the father owl and the children; the whole family have sharp ears, and they heard every word the hen said. They turned up their eyes and fluttered their wings, and the mother said, "Don't listen to such things. But I dare say you heard what was said? I heard it with my own ears, and they have to hear a great deal before they are done with. One of those hens down there forgets so entirely what is becoming to a hen, that she pulls out all her feathers for the cock to see."

"*Prenez garde aux enfants!*" said the father owl; "that's not a fit story for children."

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"I will just tell it to the owl next door, though; there is no owl more looked up to in the neighbourhood."

"Tu-whoo! tu-whoo!" screeched the two owls, close to the neighbour's dove-cot. "Did you hear that? Tu-whoo! There is a hen yonder who has pulled out all her feathers to please the cock; she will certainly freeze to death, if she isn't frozen already. Tu-whoo!"

"Where? where?" cooed the pigeons.

"In the farmyard close by. I have as good as seen it myself. It is scarcely a fit story to tell, but it is quite true."

"You may believe it—every single word of it," cooed the pigeons, and off they flew, down to their own poultry-yard. "There is a hen up there, some people say there are two, and they have pulled out all their feathers to make themselves look different from the rest, and attract the attention of the cock. It is rather a dangerous game, and very likely to bring on cold and fever; indeed, so it has done; both the hens are dead!"

"Wake up! wake up!" crowed the cock, flying up on to his plank; his eyes were drowsy with sleep, but he crowed all the same. "Three hens have died of love for one cock. They had pulled out all their feathers. It's a horrible story; I can't keep it to myself, so it may go farther."

"Pass it on," hissed the bats, "pass it on." The hens clucked, and the cock crowed, the story flew from henroost to henroost, till it came back to the one whence it first started.

"Five hens," the story ran, "have plucked out all their feathers, to show which of them had grown the thinnest out of love for the cock; and then they had all fallen upon and pecked each other to death, to the


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shame and disgrace of their families, and the serious loss of their owner."

The white hen who had dropped the little feather naturally did not recognize her own story; and as she was a very respectable hen, she said, "I despise such hens; but there are many like them. A story like that ought not to be hushed up. I shall do my best to get it into the newspapers, it will then be spread all over the country. The hens richly deserve it, and so do their families."

It got into the newspapers, was printed, and—it is quite true—one little feather can grow into five hens!

The Daisy.



OW listen. Out in the country, close to the road-side, stood a pretty house; you must have seen it yourself. There was a small garden in front with a green palisading, and close to the neighbouring hedgerow grew a little daisy. She grew in the soft, green grass; the sunshine fell on her as brightly as on the tall, beautiful flowers in the garden. Day by day she grew taller, and one morning she stood with her crown of dazzlingly white petals unfolded, making a wreath of light round the yellow sun in the centre.

She did not fret because no one could see her in the grass, or because she was a poor, despised flower;

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no, she was full of thankfulness, and turned herself towards the warm sun, looked up to the sky, and listened to the lark singing in the air. The little daisy was as happy as if it were a holiday; and yet it was only Monday. The children were all in school sitting on forms and learning their lessons. She, too, sat up on her tiny green stem, and learnt her lesson; learnt from the warm sunshine, and from all around, how good God is; she was very glad that the little lark could sing out so clearly all that she felt in silence. The daisy looked up admiringly at the happy bird who could sing and fly; but she was not angry because she could do neither. "I can see and hear him," she thought; "the sun shines on me, and the wind kisses me. How happy and well-cared for I am!"

Inside the palisading stood many grand, stiff flowers; the less scent they had, the more airs they gave themselves. The peonies spread themselves out, to make themselves look larger than the roses; but size is not everything. The tulips had the loveliest colours; and very well they knew it, holding themselves as stiffly as possible that every one might see them. They never glanced at the little daisy outside; but she looked at them, and thought to herself, "How rich and beautiful they are! The loveliest birds must fly down to them and visit them. How I thank God that I grow so near, and can see all their beauty!" As she thought this, "Tra-la!" the lark came flying down; but not to the peonies and tulips, no, right down to the little daisy in the green grass. She trembled so with joy that she hardly knew what had happened.

The little bird hopped round her and sang, "How soft the grass is! and look, what a sweet little flower, with a silver dress and a golden heart!" For the daisy's leaves

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were bright as silver, and the yellow centre glowed like gold. How happy she felt, no one can ever tell! The lark kissed her with his beak, sang to her, and then flew away through the warm, blue air. It was a quarter of an hour before the daisy could recover herself. Half in delight, half shyly, she glanced at the other flowers in the garden; they had seen the honour and the joy that had befallen her, surely they must understand her joy and happiness!

But the tulips held themselves as stiffly as ever, and were quite red in the face, for they were very angry. The peonies were slow and stupid; it was a good thing they could not speak; if they could have done so, the daisy would have had a thorough scolding. The poor little flower could see that they were out of temper, and she felt very grieved. Just then a servant maid came into the garden with a bright, sharp knife, with which she cut down the tulips one after another.

"Oh!" sighed the daisy, "that is dreadful—it is all over with them now."

The girl went away with them into the house; and the daisy rejoiced, and gave thanks that she was only a poor little flower growing wild among the grass. When the sun went down, she folded her leaves and fell asleep, to dream the whole night through of the sunshine and the lark.

The next day, when the happy flower opened her white leaves, stretching them wide like out-spread arms to the light and air, she heard the lark's voice, but the tones were very sad. The poor bird had cause enough for sorrow; he was a prisoner now, and sat in a cage by the open window. He sang of his free and happy wanderings, of the young corn in the field, and of his glorious flight through the air to greet the sun. The

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poor lark was sad and downcast as he sat a prisoner in its cage.

The little daisy longed to help him. But how could she? There seemed no way. She forgot everything around her, the warm sunshine, and the beauty of her own white leaves. She could think of nothing but of the caged bird whom she was unable to help.

At that moment up ran two little boys out of the garden; one of them held a sharp knife in his hand, like the one the servant had used to cut down the tulips; they came straight up to the daisy, who could not think what they wanted.

"Here's a nice piece of turf for the lark," said one of them, and he began to cut a square piece round where the daisy grew, so that she was left in the middle of the square.

"Pull that daisy up," said the other boy; and the flower trembled with fear, for that meant death to her, and she wanted to live now, that she might go with the piece of turf into the cage of the captive lark.

"No, let it be," said the other; "it makes it look pretty." So she was left standing and put into the cage.

The lark mourned piteously over his lost freedom; and beat his wings against the side of the cage. The little daisy could not speak to him, much as she longed to say some word of comfort. The morning passed away. "There is no water," said the imprisoned lark. "They have all gone out and have forgotten to leave me anything to eat or drink. My throat is dry and burning; it feels like fire and ice, and the air is heavy. Ah! I must die, and leave the warm sunshine, the fresh grass, and all the beautiful things which God has made;" he thrust his beak into the cool turf to allay his thirst, and as he did so his glance fell on the little daisy.

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He nodded to the flower and kissed her. "So you, too, are brought here to fade and die, poor little thing!" he said. "They have brought me you and your tiny bit of turf for the whole world which I had outside. Every blade of grass is to be a tree for me, and every one of your white leaves a fragrant flower. Alas! you only make me think how much I have lost!"

"If I could only comfort him!" thought the daisy. She could not speak, but the fragrance from her leaves was richer than it had ever been before; the lark noticed it too, and though he was fainting with thirst, and tore up the blades of grass in his agony, he never touched the daisy.

Evening drew on. No one came to bring the poor lark a drop of water; he stretched out his pretty wings and fluttered them convulsively, his song died away to a faint chirping, his little head sank down beneath the flower; he died heart-broken with want and sorrow.

The daisy could not fold her leaves, and sleep as she had done last night; she drooped down sadly towards the earth.

The boys did not come by till the next morning. When they saw the dead bird they cried bitterly, and dug him a neat little grave strewn with flowers. His body was laid in a fine red box, he was to be buried like a prince, poor bird! While he lived and sang they forgot him and left him to die of want in his cage, but now that he was dead, he had flowers strewn over him and many tears.

But the bit of turf with the daisy on it was thrown out on to the dusty roadside; no one thought of her who had felt the most for the little bird, and tried so hard to comfort him.

The Galoshes of Fortune.

I. A BEGINNING.



IN a house in Copenhagen, not far from the king's new market, a large party was assembled, doubtless with the idea of giving and receiving fresh invitations. One half of the company was settled at the card-tables; the other half was waiting the result of the hostess's question. "Well, what shall we do next?" They had got to that point, and the evening's entertainment was fairly beginning. The conversation fell, among other topics, on the middle ages; some of the guests considered that a much more interesting time than our own day; Councillor Knap supported this view so warmly, that the lady of the house was gained over to his side, and both were very hot against Oerstedt's article on ancient and modern times, in the last magazine, in which the preference was given to the present day.

The Councillor considered that the reign of the Danish King Hans* was the noblest and happiest time to have lived in.

While this discussion formed the subject of conversation, only interrupted by the arrival of a newspaper,

* Married Christina, daughter of the Elector Ernest of Saxony
Died 1513.

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which contained nothing worth reading, we will go out into the cloak-room, where all the shawls, walkingsticks, and goloshes were kept. Two women, one young and the other old, were sitting there; at the first glance it seemed as if they were waiting to walk home with their mistresses; but on looking closer one saw at once that they were no ordinary servants; their faces were too delicate and noble, and their dress too fantastic and costly.

They were two fairies. The younger one was not Happiness herself; she was the waiting-maid of fortune, who is the waiting-maid of Happiness, and who distributes her smaller gifts. The elder one was Care; she always attends to her business in her own person, for she says that if you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself.

They were telling each other where they had been that day; the messenger of Fortune had only been sent on a few trifling errands, such as saving a new bonnet from a shower of rain, getting an honest man a gracious bow from a rich nullity, &c., but what she had still to do was more interesting. "I must tell you that this is my birthday," she said; "and in honour of the day I have been entrusted with a pair of goloshes which I am to present to mankind. These goloshes have the power of transporting instantly, any one who puts them on, to any place and time he chooses. Every wish relating to time, place, or existence, is immediately granted, so men have a chance at last of being happy here below."

"Believe me," said Care, "your goloshes will make everybody utterly miserable, and ready to bless the day when he gets rid of them."

"How can you think so?" said the other. "Look, I

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will put them by the door ; somebody will take them for his own and be the happy man."

Now that proved to be the Councillor.

II. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COUNCILLOR.

It was growing late. Councillor Knap, full of the reign of King Hans, was preparing to go home ; as fate would have it, he put on the goloshes of fortune instead of his own, and stepped into the street. The magic power of the goloshes had taken him back to his favourite reign, so he set his foot straight into the miry swamp of the street, for of course there were no paving-stones at that time.

"It is shamefully dirty about here," said the Councillor ; "why the pavement is taken up, and the street lamps are out."

The moon was not very bright, and there was a slight fog, so that all the objects round looked confused and blurred. At the nearest corner a lamp swung before a picture of the Madonna ; the light was so bad that the Councillor did not see it till he was quite close under it ; and then his eyes fell on the painting of the child and His mother.

"That must be an old curiosity dealer's," he thought ; "they have forgotten to take in the sign." A group of men, in the costume of the period, passed by. "How odd they look ! they must be coming home from a masquerade," thought the bewildered Councillor.

Suddenly the sound of drums was heard, and the red gleam of torches came nearer ; the Councillor drew back, and saw the strangest procession pass by. First came the drummers beating their drums lustily ; they

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were followed by men-at-arms carrying cross bows and long bows. The most distinguished person in the procession seemed to be a clerical dignitary. Lost in astonishment, the Councillor asked what it all meant, and who that man was?

"That is the Bishop of Zealand."

"Good gracious! what has come to the Bishop?" exclaimed the Councillor. "Oh nonsense! it can't be the Bishop." Trying to puzzle it out, and looking neither to the right nor the left, he went along the street and across the place where the high bridge crosses to the Castle square. But no bridge was to be seen. He stood on the marshy shore of a piece of water, where he lighted at last on two men in a boat.

"Shall we ferry the gentleman across to the Holm?" they asked.

"Ferry me across to the Holm?" exclaimed the Councillor, who did not know of course what year he was living in. "I want to go to Christian's Haven, in Little Turf-street."

The men stared at him. "Just tell me where the bridge is?" he said. "It is shameful that the lamps are not lighted here; it is as dirty as a marsh." But the longer he talked to the boatmen, the less he could make of them.

"I can't understand your Bornholm jargon," he said, angrily, as he turned away. He could not find the bridge; there was not even a handrail. "This place is a disgrace to the town," he cried. He never thought worse of the century he lived in than he did at that moment. "I shall have to call a cab," he said to himself, but there was none to be seen. "I must go straight back to the cabstand in the New market, or else I shall never reach Christian's Haven this night."

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He went towards East-street, and had almost reached it, when the moon shone forth. "Heavens! what's all this scaffolding put up for?" he cried, as he came in sight of the East-gate, which stood there in the reign of King Hans. He found one of the doors open and 'passed through into the New market. But there was nothing before him but a great meadow, with a lonely bush here and there, and a broad stream flowing through. A few wretched wooden huts for the Dutch sailors stood on the opposite side. "Either I am the sport of *fata morgana*, or I am intoxicated!" said the unhappy Councillor. "What can it be? What *can* it be?"

He turned away in the firm conviction that he was very ill. As he walked back along the streets, he looked more closely at the houses, and found that the greater part of them had only straw roofs. "No; I am not at all well," he said to himself; "and yet I had only one glass of punch. But it always disagrees with me. I must have been out of my mind to drink punch with hot salmon; and so I shall tell our hostess. Shall I go back there and say how very unwell I feel? Oh, but that would look quite ridiculous, besides, it's a question whether I shall find them up now."

He looked for the house, but could not find it anywhere. "This is dreadful! I don't know the street, I can't see one shop, nothing but miserable tumbledown houses like those in Roeskilde and Ringstedt. I am very ill, it's no use being too scrupulous. But where in the world is my friend the agent's house? This is not it, but at any rate the people are up; oh! I'm very ill."

He passed through the half-open door through which the light was shining into a rough kind of beer-house. The room looked like a Dutch wine-shop; a number

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of people, sailors, citizens of Copenhagen, and a few students, sat talking over their wine-cups, and scarcely glanced at the new comer.

"Excuse me," said the Councillor to the landlady. "I don't feel well, will you kindly fetch me a cab? I want to go to Christian's Haven."

The woman stared at him, shook her head, and after a pause spoke to him in German. The Councillor thought from that that she did not understand Danish, and repeated his request in German, which, together with his costume, convinced the woman that he was a foreigner. She soon made out that he was feeling ill and brought him a pitcher of water; it tasted strongly of sea water, though it was drawn from the well outside. The Councillor leaned his head upon his hand, drew a deep sigh, and puzzled over the strange things around him.

"Is that a number of to-night's *Day*?"* he asked mechanically of the landlady as he saw her lay aside a large sheet of paper. She could not understand him, but she handed him the paper. It was a wood-cut representing a meteor which had been seen in Cologne.

"This is very old," said the Councillor; the antiquity of the thing quite revived him. "How did you come by this very valuable paper? It is most interesting. Though, of course, the whole thing is fabulous. These meteors are known to be the Northern lights, they are most likely caused by electricity."

The men who sat next him and heard him speak looked at him in amazement; one of them lifted his hat respectfully, and said gravely, "You are doubtless a very learned man, sir?"

* An evening paper in Copenhagen.

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"I!" said the Councillor, "not at all. I can say a few words about things that all the world knows."

"*Modestia* is a great virtue," said the man. "And I can certainly say to your remark *mihi secus videtur*, but there I must suspend my *judicium*."

"May I ask to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" inquired the Councillor.

"I am a bachelor of divinity," was the reply. The answer completely satisfied the Councillor. The title and dress were in accord.

"He is certainly some old village schoolmaster," he thought, "an old original, such as one sometimes meets up in Zutland."

"This is by no means a *locus docendi*," said the man, "and yet I beg you to continue your discourse. You are doubtless well read in the ancients." "Pretty well," replied the Councillor. "I like useful books, ancient and modern too, except, indeed, every day stories."

"Every day stories!" repeated the divinity student.

"I mean the new novels they write now-a-days."

"Oh!" said the student, smiling, "but they are very witty, and much read at Court; the King is especially fond of the Romance written by Messieurs Iffven and Gaudian about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. He has laughed over it with his great lords."

"I certainly have not read that," said the Councillor; "it must be quite a new book, published by Herberg, I suppose?"

"No," answered his companion; "not Herberg, Godfrey of Gehmen* published it." "Oh, is he the

* The first printer and publisher in Denmark: contemporary with King Hans.

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publisher? That is a very old name. Why that was the name of the very first printer in Denmark."

"Well, he is the first printer in Denmark," said the student.

They have got on very well so far—but now one of the people in the room began to talk of the dreadful plague that had been raging a few years back. They meant the plague of 1484, but the Councillor thought they were talking of the cholera, so they managed to understand each other tolerably well. The Freebooters' War of 1480 was so recent, that of course that was touched upon: the English pirates, the men said, had carried off the ships from the very harbours: the Councillor, who was well up in the events of 1801, joined heartily in the abuse of the English. But afterwards the conversation did not go on so pleasantly. Every moment some one flatly contradicted some one else: the good student seemed profoundly ignorant, and received the most commonplace remarks of the Councillor with the wildest astonishment. One looked at another, and when things were at the worst, the divinity student spoke Latin in the hope of throwing some light on the confusion, but it was no use. "How do you feel now?" said the landlady, pulling the Councillor by the sleeve. This brought him to his senses. In the heat of conversation he had forgotten all that had previously occurred.

"Heaven above! Where am I?" he cried, and he turned positively giddy as he thought of it all.

"Bring claret, mead, and brewer beer!" cried one of the guests. "You shall drink with us."

Two girls came in; one wore a cap of two colours. They filled the cups and curtsied, and the Councillor felt a cold shiver run all down his back.

"What is the meaning of this? what is the meaning of

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it?" he cried. But he was forced to drink with them; they simply took possession of the good man, and when somebody said he was tipsy, he did not doubt them for a moment, and merely begged and entreated that they would fetch him a cab. They thought he was talking Muscovite.

Never had he been in such a rough, vulgar set. "Why, the land must have fallen back into heathenism," he thought. "This is the most dreadful moment of my life." The desperate idea occurred to him of trying to escape by slipping under the table and reaching the open door; he had almost succeeded, when his companions saw his attempt and seized him by the legs. There was a struggle, the goloshes came off—and the enchantment was at an end!

The Councillor saw before him the friendly gleam of a street-lamp; behind that was a large building; everything looked stately and familiar. It was the East Street of to-day; he was lying with his feet on a doorstep; exactly opposite him sat the watchman, asleep.

"Merciful powers!" he cried; "here have I been lying dreaming in the street. Yes, it is East Street. How bright and gay it looks! It is really shocking to think that one glass of punch could have had such an effect on me!"

Two minutes later he was in a cab driving to Christian's Haven. He thought of the horrid night he had just passed through; and blessed from his heart the happy waking to our present day, which, with all its faults, is a vast deal better than the time which he had left behind him.

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III. THE WATCHMAN'S ADVENTURE.

"Upon my word, there are a pair of goloshes!" cried the watchman, waking up; "they must belong to the lieutenant who lives up yonder; they have been dropped close to the door."

The honest man would have rung the bell and given them to the servant, but it was not light yet, so he let it be.

"These must be nice warm things to have on," he said "how soft the leather is!" He tried them on, and they fitted exactly. "It's a queer world!" he thought. "The lieutenant might get into his warm bed if he chose, but not he! There he goes, pacing up and down the room. He's a lucky fellow! neither wife nor child, and out at a party every night! Oh, I wish I were he! I should be a happy man then."

As he uttered the wish the goloshes worked their spell, and there he was in the opposite house—the lieutenant! Up and down the room he paced, holding in his hand a small rose-tinted paper, on which was a poem, written by no less a person than the lieutenant himself.

For who has not had once in his life an inspired moment when, if one writes one's thoughts, they will persist in coming out in verse?

This was what was written on the rose-tinted paper—

"Oh, were I rich!"—such was my childish prayer,
When few of Life's brief summers had passed o'er me;
And, bright with promised hope and fortune rare,
The world lay new and beautiful before me.

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"Oh, were I rich !—I'd be a soldier bold,
With sword, and epaulettes of burnished gold."
The swift years gave me half my wish secure :
They brought the epaulettes—but left me poor !

One evening as I played, a laughing boy,
My little playmate kissed me in her joy,
For I was passing rich in fairy lore,
And her sweet, childish fancy asked no more.
I poured out all the store my brain inspired,
The little maiden listened, never tired ;
And as the happy, careless days flew by,
Who were so rich—so poor, as she and I ?

My manhood echoes back my childish prayer—
The child is now a maiden, tall and fair,
So good, so sweet, so wise, and true of heart,
That it is life to greet her, death to part.
Her dear voice thrills me in the morning's light,
And haunts my troubled dreams in weary night ;
But lack of gold my trembling lips has sealed—
My heart's true fairy tale lies unrevealed.

Oh, were I rich ! were life all peace and light,
My sorrow should not fill this idle lay :
Take it, beloved—canst thou read aright
The story of our childhood far away ?
The happy story, ended long ago,
Untouched by life's harsh legacy of woe ?
Ah, no ! this tale is sad—thou wilt but see
Gloom from the hopeless future yet to be.

Yes, that is the sort of poetry one writes when one is in love ; but no sensible man would think of having it printed. Lieutenant, love and poverty make three sides of a triangle, or, if you will, half of the broken die of fortune. The lieutenant felt that keenly : he leaned his head against the window-pane and sighed aloud :

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"The poor watchman in the street is far happier than I. He does not know what poverty means to me. He has a home, and wife and children, who mourn when he is sad, and rejoice with him in his happiness. Oh, I should be far happier if I could change places with him, and go through life with his wants and his hopes. Yes, he is happier than I."

That very moment the watchman was a watchman again: we saw how the goloshes of fortune turned him into the lieutenant, but, as we know, he felt less contented than ever, and preferred what he had despised before. So the watchman was a watchman once more.

"That was a horrid dream," he cried; "but comical too: I thought I was the lieutenant up there, and I didn't like it at all. I wanted my wife and the lads, who will be ready to smother me with kisses."

He sat down again and nodded, for he could not quite lose the impressions of his dream. The goloshes were still on his feet, when a shooting star flashed across the sky.

"Off she goes!" he cried. "But there are plenty left behind. I should like to see those things closer, more especially the moon; for that doesn't melt away in one's hands. The student that my wife washes for says that when we are dead we shall fly about from one star to another. That is a lie, but it would be nice to. If I could give a little jump up there, I should like to leave my body behind me on this doorstep."

Now there are certain things that ought not to be lightly spoken, especially when one has on the goloshes of fortune. Just listen to what happened to the watchman.

As far as we are concerned, we all of us know the speed of steam, for we have tried it, either on the

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railway or in a steamer; but it is like the movement of a sloth or a snail, compared to the speed of light. That moves nineteen million times more quickly.

Death is an electric shock which we receive in our hearts, and the soul, set free, flies forth on the wings of electricity. It takes the sunbeam eight minutes and a few seconds to accomplish a journey of more than ninety-five million miles; but the soul, in its electric speed, outstrips the light. The space between two heavenly bodies is no more to her than the distance between two houses in the same neighbourhood is to us. Meanwhile this electric shock to the heart costs us our bodies; unless indeed we happen, like the watchman, to be wearing the goloshes of fortune.

In a few seconds the watchman had passed through the 260,000 miles between the earth and the moon, which, as everybody knows, is made of much softer material than our world—as soft indeed as new-fallen snow.

He found himself on one of the innumerable mountain ranges, which we may see marked on Dr. Mädler's map of the moon. In the centre was a circular basin, the sides of which were two miles deep; at the bottom of this hollow lay a town looking something like the white of an egg turned out into a glass of water; there he saw towers, and cupolas, and climbing terraces, cloud-like, transparent, floating in the air. Our earth hung above his head like a large dark-red ball.

He saw a number of figures that were certainly what we should call men, and yet they were quite different from ourselves. A wilder fancy than Herschel's had called them into life. If they had been set up in a row, and painted, one would have said, "Oh, what a lovely arabesque!" They had a language of their own, but

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surely no one would expect the watchman's soul to understand that. Nevertheless, it did understand it, for the soul has greater capabilities than we think for. Are you never surprised at the strange dramatic talent you put forth in your dreams? Every acquaintance is perfectly represented, speech, face, and character all personated to the life; we could never imitate so well in our waking hours. How we recall people we have not seen or thought of for years, with every feature and gesture true and lifelike in their smallest details. There is something fearful in this soul-memory; it can bring back every sin, every evil thought; it must depend on ourselves whether we can meet the reckoning for every idle word of our lips, every dark thought of our hearts.

The soul of the watchman, then, understood the language of the moon's inhabitants very well. They were disputing about our earth; doubting whether it were inhabited. The air was so heavy up there, they thought, that no reasonable moon-creature could live in it. They maintained that the moon alone was inhabited; the only heavenly body where the old-world inhabitants lived. They spoke, too, of politics; but we are wanted down in East Street, to see what happened to the body of the watchman.

It lay there lifeless on the doorstep; the staff had slipped out of its hand, and its eyes were turned upwards to the moon, where its honest soul was wandering.

"What o'clock is it, watchman?" cried a passer-by. But he got no answer from the watchman. The man stooped to tweak his nose, when the body fell back at full length, and lay there—dead. His comrades were very much alarmed. Dead he was, and dead he remained; his death was made known, talked over, and in the early morning his body was carried to the hospital.

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That promised to be a pretty thing for the soul when she came back, and went, as in all probability she would go, to look for her body where she had left it, in East Street. Most likely she would go first to the police-court, and then to the advertising office, to make inquiry for the missing article; last of all to the hospital. But we may take comfort in the thought that the soul is cleverest when she is acting on her own account; it is only the body which makes her stupid.

As we said before, the watchman's body was taken to the hospital, and was laid in a room to be washed; and of course the first thing to be done was to take off the goloshes. Back came the soul to the body with lightning speed, and in a few seconds the man was alive again. He declared that it had been the most horrible night he had ever spent in his life, he would not go through it again for five shillings. But it was over now.

He was dismissed from the hospital the same day, but the goloshes were forgotten and left behind.

IV. AN EVENTFUL MOMENT—A STRANGE JOURNEY.

Every one in Copenhagen knows the entrance to the Frederick's Hospital; but it is possible that some who will read this story have not seen Copenhagen, and therefore a short description is necessary.

The hospital is separated from the street by a rather high iron palisading, and the strong iron rails stand so far apart, that it is said that one or two very slim students have managed to squeeze through, to pay their little visits out of doors. The great difficulty was to get one's head through; there, as elsewhere, the people

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with the least heads were the best off. That is the introduction to our story.

One of the young students, of whom it could be said, in one sense, that he had a great head, was on duty that evening at the hospital; the rain was pouring down; but in spite of these two obstacles he wanted to go out—only for a quarter of an hour; it was not worth while to trouble the porter, he thought, when he might slip through the railings. There lay the goloshes which the watchman had left behind him; it did not occur to him for an instant that they were the goloshes of fortune; they would be very useful in this bad weather, and he put them on. Now the question was whether he would be able to squeeze through; he had never tried before. "I wish to heaven I had my head through!" he cried; and in a moment, in spite of its size and thickness, it slipped through quite easily. The goloshes knew their business; but now the body had to follow, and that was another matter. "I am too stout!" he cried. "I thought the head was the worst part. I can't get through."

He tried to draw his head back, but he could not do that either. He could bend his neck, and that was all. The first thing he did was to fly into a passion, and the next to feel very low-spirited. The goloshes of fortune had brought him into this terrible position, and unfortunately he never thought of wishing to be free. The rain streamed down, not a soul was to be seen in the street; he could not reach the bell; however could he get loose? He saw very well that he would have to stay there till the morning; and then they would be obliged to send for a blacksmith that he might saw through the iron bar. But that cannot be done in a hurry; the whole charity-school would be out before

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then, and all the sailors from their quarters near would crowd to see him in his pillory. "I shall have a rush of blood to the head," he cried. "I shall certainly go mad! Oh, if I were only out again!"

Now, why couldn't he have said that before? The moment the wish was uttered he was set free, and rushed back into the hospital, quite dizzy with the fright which the goloshes of fortune had given him.

But do not think for an instant that that was the end of it; no, there was worse to come.

The night passed by, and the following day—and no one came for the goloshes. In the evening there was to be a performance at the amateur theatre, in a street some distance off. The house was crowded; and among the audience was the hospital student, who seemed to have forgotten his adventure of the previous night. He still wore the goloshes, for they had not been fetched away, and the streets were very muddy. A new poem, "My Aunt's Spectacles," was recited; it was about a pair of spectacles which, when you looked through them, made all the people look like packs of cards, so that you could foretell from them what was going to happen next year.

The idea struck him, he would have liked to possess such a pair of spectacles; rightly used, they would help the wearer to look into the hearts of all whom he saw. "That," thought the student, "would be much more interesting than foretelling what will happen next year; because if one lives long enough one will know that for oneself, but one can never see into another's heart.

"I can just imagine looking through the hearts of the ladies and gentlemen in the first row—it would be like walking through different shops. I should like my eyes open. In that lady's heart I should most certainly

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find a milliner's shop; the shop next door would be empty, but all the better for a good cleaning. I daresay there would be some very good shops, though, among them. Indeed I know of one; but there is some one in possession there already—that is the only thing I have against it. From every shop I should hear, 'Please to walk in'—ah, I wish I could glide through the hearts like a tiny little thought!"

That was the cue for the goloshes. The student shrank into nothing, and began his strange journey through the hearts of the people in the front row. The first heart he entered was a lady's, but he thought for a moment he must be in an orthopædic hospital—in the room where the walls are hung with plaster-casts of deformed limbs. The only difference was, that in the hospital they were taken when the patient came in, and here they were made up after the patient had left. They were all casts of the lady's friends, whose bodily and mental defects she carefully preserved.

He passed quickly into another heart—a woman's this time also. This one seemed to him like a consecrated church; the white dove of innocence hovered above the high altar: he would fain have knelt, but he was hurried on. Sounds as of an organ followed him, he seemed to leave the place another and a better man. He felt not unworthy to enter the next heart: it was a poor place; a garret where a sick mother lay, but through the window streamed God's blessed sunshine, lovely roses hung downwards from the roof, two sky-blue birds sang of the joy of childhood, and the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her child. Then he crept on his hands and feet through an over-full slaughter-house: meat—meat—nothing but meat filled every corner. This was the heart of a highly-

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respectable man whose address is certain to be found in the directory. Next came the heart of the man's wife—it was an old, ruined dovecot: above the door stood the portrait of her husband on a weather-cock, and, according as this turned, the door opened and shut.

Then he came into a room lined with mirrors, such as one sees in the Rosenberg Castle: the mirrors magnified to an incredible degree. In the middle of the carpet, like the Grand Dame of Thibet, sat the very magnificent self who owned the heart, and gazed astonished at his own greatness. After this, the student thought he must be in a box full of sharp needles, and he said to himself, "This is certainly the heart of some spiteful old maid." But no: the heart belonged to a young officer, who wore several medals, and was said to be a man of taste and feeling.

Quite bewildered, the poor student came out of the heart of the last person in the front row: he could not collect his thoughts; it seemed as if his imagination had quite run away with him.

"Heavens!" he cried, "it is enough to drive one mad. How terribly hot it is here! I shall certainly have a rush of blood to the head." That reminded him of what had happened the night before, and how his head had stuck fast between the iron railings of the hospital. "That's what has done it," he thought. "I must take it in time. A Turkish bath would be the very thing. I wish I were lying on the highest shelf now."

There he lay, on the topmost shelf of a vapour-bath; but he had on all his clothes, boots and goloshes as well. The hot water from the ceiling fell on his face.

"Ugh!" he cried, and rushed down to take a plunging bath. The attendant uttered a loud cry as he caught sight of the new-comer with all his clothes on.

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The student had just enough presence of mind left to whisper to him, "It's only a wager." But the first thing that he did as soon as ever he reached his own room, was to put one blister on his neck and another on his back, in the hope that they would set him right.

The next day the skin was off his back—and that was all he got by the goloshes of fortune.

V.. THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF A COPYING CLERK.

The watchman—you have not forgotten the watchman, I hope?—thought now and then of the goloshes he had left at the hospital. He fetched them away, but as neither the lieutenant nor any one else in East Street would own them, they were given up to the police. "They look like my own goloshes," said one of the clerks in the office. He examined the unclaimed property and placed them by his own. "It wants the eye of a cleverer shoemaker than I am to tell the difference between them," he said.

"For the copying-clerk," said a boy, coming in and laying down a bundle of papers. The clerk turned round, and when he had spoken to the boy he returned to the goloshes; but could not for the life of him remember whether it was the pair to the right or that to the left which belonged to him.

"These must be mine, they are rather damp," he said. But he was wrong, as it happened; they were the goloshes of fortune—even a clerk can make a mistake sometimes. He put them on, pocketed the bundle of papers, and took some manuscripts under his arm, that he might go over them and write his summary at home.

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It was a Sunday morning and the weather was fine. "A walk to Friedrichsburg would do me no harm," he thought, and he wended his way thither.

There was not a quieter, steadier young man in Copenhagen than our worthy clerk; and certainly no one could grudge him his little walk, or doubt that it would do him good. At first he walked along, passively vegetating; the goloshes had not a chance of showing their magic power.

In the avenue he met an acquaintance, a young poet of our day, who told him that he was going to set out on his summer tour the next morning.

"Going off again?" said the copying clerk. "What a fortunate fellow you are! Free to come and go wherever you like, instead of being chained by the leg as we are."

"But the chain is fastened to the bread-fruit tree," said the poet; "you need take no care for the morrow, and when you are old you receive a pension."

"You are the best off, notwithstanding," said the clerk; "writing poetry is a pleasure in itself. Every one has something pleasant to say to you, and you are your own master. You should only try sitting stooping over the dry stuff we have to scribble down."

The poet shook his head, and so did the clerk. Each held to his own opinion, but they parted in good temper.

"They are a peculiar set, these poets," thought the clerk. "I should like to try for myself what it feels like to be a poet. If I were one, I am sure I should not write such doleful ditties as the rest of them—and this a perfect spring day for a poet! The air is so crystal clear, the clouds so beautiful, and the grass so cool and fragrant. Never have I felt for years as I feel now!"

You observe already that the clerk is a poet. The

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Germans would consider it bad taste to point this out; for they say that it is a popular delusion to imagine that a poet is, in any way, different from other men; indeed, there are many more poetical natures in the world than those possess who are acknowledged poets. The only difference is, that the professed poet has a better memory: he can hold fast his thought or sentiment till he has embodied it clearly in verse, and the others cannot. Be that as it may, the transition from a common-place to an imaginative nature is a sensible one, and it cannot help striking one in the clerk's case.

"This delicious fragrance!" he exclaimed; "how it reminds me of Aunt Lora's violets. That was long ago, when I was a child, but I never thought of it till now. Dear old auntie! She lived by the water side, and she would always have a flower or a slip of green growing, even in the depth of winter. Her violets bloomed when I used to hold hot pennies against the frost-covered window-panes to make round peep-holes. It was a pretty vista. The frost-bound ships stood in the canal, abandoned by the crews, a solitary crow, the only living thing, in charge. When the spring breezes blew, the scene became more lively: the ice broke up amid cheers and hurrahs; the ships were tarred and newly rigged, and sailed proudly away to distant lands. I stayed behind, as I always must stay, to sit at my desk and write out passports for other people who can go abroad. That is my lot!" He sighed deeply, and then paused abruptly. "Heavens! what has come over me! I never felt or thought like this before. It must be the air of spring—it is as pleasant as it is alarming." He put his hand in his pocket for the packet of papers. "They will give me something else to think about," he said. His eyes fell on the first page—"Lady Sigbrith,

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an original tragedy in five acts," was what he read. "What is this? My own handwriting, too! Have I written a tragedy? 'Shrove Tuesday; or the intrigue at the Carnival, a comedy.' Wherever did I get them from? They must have been put into my pocket! Here is a letter from the manager of the theatre—the pieces declined, with thanks—and the letter not too politely worded!"

The clerk sat down upon a bench; his thoughts were unsettled, his heart was soft. Involuntarily he plucked the nearest flower; it was a common daisy. All that the botanist tells us in many lectures the flower revealed in a moment. She told the story of her birth, the power of the sunshine that opened her delicate leaves, and drew out her fragrance. And he thought of the battle of life, which draws out the strength and sweetness of our hearts. Air and light are the flower's suitors, but light is the favoured one. Towards him she turns, and when he fades away, she folds her leaves, and sleeps in the embrace of the air. "Light makes me beautiful," cries the flower. "But air gives you life," whispered the poet's voice.

Near at hand was a boy, striking the marshy swamp with his cane; the drops of water flew high in the air, and the clerk thought of the myriad living atoms in each drop, to whom such a flight would be as wonderful as it would be to us to be whirled high above the clouds. He thought, too, of the change within himself, and smiled. "I am dreaming," he cried; "it is wonderful how vividly one can dream, and yet know all the while that one is dreaming! I hope I shall be able to remember it when I wake to-morrow. I seem to be strangely excited. What a clear insight I have into all around, and how free I feel! But I am sure that

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when I remember it in the morning it will be stupid stuff. That has happened to me before. The wonderful and lovely things one sees and hears in dreams are all like fairy gold—solid and splendid by night, but in the daylight nothing but stones and withered leaves. Ah," he cried, mournfully, as he watched the song birds fly from bough to bough, "they are the best off. How glorious it must be to fly! Happy the man who is born with wings! If I could change with any one, I would choose to be a lark!"

As he framed the wish, his sleeves and coat tails shrank up into wings, his clothes became feathers, his goloshes claws. He saw it all with a smile. "That proves I am dreaming," he said, "but I never dreamed so vividly before!" He sang as he flew from bough to bough, but there was no poetry in his song: the poetic nature had disappeared. The goloshes, like every one else who does his work thoroughly, could only do one thing at a time. He wished to be a poet, and he was one. Now he wanted to be a little bird, and his former gift had vanished. "This is charming," he thought. "All day long I sit over my desk, busy among the most commonplace documents, and at night I fly about the Friedrichsburg Gardens like a lark! It is as good as a play."

He flew down among the grass, and whetted his beak on its pliant blades. In proportion to his present size, they seemed tall as the palm trees of North Africa.

He only stayed there a moment: it grew dark around him. What seemed to him a monstrous object was thrown over him; it was a sailor's hat, thrown by a lad. A hand was put under, and seized the clerk by the wing. In his first start of terror, he cried out, "You impudent rascal! I'm a clerk at the police office!" But it only

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sounded to the boy like, "Tweet, tweet!" He tapped the bird on the beak, and walked off with it.

In the avenue he met two school boys of the upper classes, socially speaking, that is—for, morally speaking, they were in the lowest class of the school; they bought the bird for a few pence, and thus the clerk returned to Copenhagen.

"It is a good thing," said the clerk, "that I am only dreaming—if I were not, I should be really angry. First, I was a poet—now I am a lark. It was my poetical nature that transformed me into this little animal. But it is a wretched business to fall into the clutches of a street boy. I shall be glad to know what will be the end of it all."

The boys brought him into a richly furnished drawing-room, where a stout, smiling lady received them. She was not very pleased at the sight of the common field bird, as she called the lark, but she consented to look it over for once. "It may go into that empty cage," she said—"the one by the window. Perhaps it will amuse my pretty Polly." She looked fondly across at a large green parrot who swung proudly to and fro in his ring inside a fine gilded cage. "It is pretty Polly's birthday," said the lady; "the little field bird can pay his respects."

Polly vouchsafed no answer, and swung to and fro in silence; but a beautiful little canary who had been brought the year before from his bright, sunny home, broke out into a burst of song.

"Noisy creature!" cried the lady, throwing a white handkerchief over the cage.

"Tweet—tweet," sighed the canary; "what a terrible snowstorm!" and he was silent.

The clerk, or, as the lady called him, the field bird,

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was put into a little cage close to the canary and not far off the parrot. The only words Polly could say, and those often came out comically enough, were "Now let us be men!" All the rest was as unintelligible as the song of the canary; but not to the copying clerk, because he was a bird and could understand his companions very well.

"I flew under the green palms and the blossoming almond trees," sang the canary. "I flew with my brothers and sisters over the lovely flowers, and the clear lake where the water lilies rocked. I saw, too, many beautiful parrots who told the merriest tales."

"Those were wild birds," said the parrot—"entirely without education. Now let us be men! Why don't you laugh? If the lady and her friends can laugh at it, surely you can do so. It is a great defect to be unable to appreciate wit. Now let us be men!"

"Do you remember the lovely maidens who danced in the tents outspread beneath the leafy trees? do you remember the sweet fruits and the cool juices of the spicy plants?"

"Oh, yes," said the parrot; "but I am better off here. I have good food, and am paid every attention. I know my abilities, and I desire no more. Let us be men! You have a poetic nature, as they call it. I have solid acquirements and wit. You have genius, but no tact. You break out in your high-flown natural tones and are immediately covered up. That is never my case. I have cost too much. I impose with my beak, and charm with my wit. Now let us be men!"

"Ah, my sweet blooming fatherland," said the canary; "I will sing of thy dark green trees and silent bays, where the branches kiss the calm waves. I will sing

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of the joy of my bright-hued brothers and sisters, where the palms rise by the desert springs."

"Pray lay aside those doleful strains," said the parrot; "sing something to make one laugh. Laughter is the sign of the highest mental development. You never see a dog or a horse laugh? They can cry—but man alone can laugh. Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the parrot, and finished off with her one joke, "Now let us be men!"

"You little grey northern bird," sang the canary, "you are a prisoner too. It is cold in your gloomy woods—but freedom dwells there. Fly away! They have forgotten to shut your cage. The window is open—fly away!"

Instinctively the copying clerk obeyed and hopped out of the cage: at the same moment the half-open door of the adjoining room creaked on its hinges; softly, with green, glittering eyes the cat sprung towards him. The canary fluttered in her cage; the parrot flapped her wings and shrieked "Now let us be men!" The copying clerk felt a deathlike terror and flew through the window away over the streets and houses till he was forced to rest.

The opposite house seemed familiar to him; a window was open: he flew in. It was his own room and he alighted on the table.

"Now let us be men!" he exclaimed involuntarily after the parrot, and in a moment he was a copying clerk again—but he was sitting on the table.

"Heaven above!" he cried; "how did I get up here? What a place to fall asleep on! and what an uneasy dream I have had. Stupid stuff it was altogether!"

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VI. THE BEST THING THE GOLOSHES DID.

The next morning, very early, while the copying clerk was still in bed, some one knocked at his door. It was a fellow lodger on the same story, a young divinity student. "Lend me your goloshes," he said, coming in; "it is very damp in the garden, but the sun shines so gloriously that I should like to go and smoke a pipe out of doors."

He put on the goloshes and hastened into the garden, which contained only one apple, and one plum tree, but inside a large town even such a small garden as that is highly valued.

The student paced up and down the garden; it was just six o'clock and a post horn was heard in the street outside. "Oh! the joy of travelling!" he exclaimed, "it is the highest good the world can offer! the dearest wish of my heart. When will my longings be set at rest? I want to travel far—far away: to see beautiful Switzerland—Italy, and"—It was a good thing that the goloshes took effect at once, or he would have gone too far for himself and for us too.

He was travelling. He was in Switzerland—tightly packed with eight other travellers inside a diligence. His head was aching, his neck stiff, his feet cramped, swollen, and tortured by his boots. Between waking and sleeping, he was conscious that his letters of credit were in the right hand, and his passport the left hand pocket of his coat; while his slenderly filled purse was sewn into a little breast pocket above. In every dream he fell into, he lost one or another of these treasures, and on awaking, he would start convulsively and

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describe a hasty triangle with his hand from right to left and up to the breast pocket, to feel that all was safe. Umbrellas, alpen-stocks and hats swung in the carriage nets above, and considerably interfered with the beautiful scenery. He took, however, flying glances here and there, and his heart sang, as at least one poet has sung before him in Switzerland—though he has never had the lines printed yet—

“High towers Mont Blanc o’er wood and dell,
A fairer vision saw I never;
Here could I gladly dream, and dwell,
If but my cash would last for ever.”

Nature was grand, and dark, and solemn all around him. The fir woods showed like velvet moss on the sides of the lofty, cloud-veiled mountain peaks. It began to snow, and the wind blew cold.

“Ugh!” he cried; “I wish we were on the other side of the Alps; we should have summer then, and I should have turned my letters of credit into money. The anxiety I feel about them prevents me thoroughly enjoying Switzerland. I wish we were on the other side.”

And there he was on the other side, between Florence and Rome; the Thrasimenean lake shone beneath the sunset sky like flaming gold between the dark blue mountains. Here, where Hannibal overthrew Flaminius, vine tendrils clasped each other with their green fingers; lovely, half naked children tended a herd of black swine under a grove of fragrant laurel trees. If we could only paint the scene as it was, every one would cry aloud “Bella Italia!” But the student and his fellow-travellers in the *vetturino* said nothing of the sort.

Venomous flies and gnats swarmed round them by thousands; vainly they tried to defend themselves with

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a myrtle bough ; the flies stung on. There was not one of the travellers whose face was not swollen and disfigured by their attacks. The poor horses suffered dreadfully ; the flies settled on them in crowds, and it was only a momentary relief when the driver got down and brushed them all away. The sun set : a brief but icy chill swept through the whole scene, like the cold air of a vault after a burning-summer day ; the clouds and mountains all around were bathed in that strange green light which we see in old pictures, and which, if we have not witnessed the play of light and colour in the south, we call unnatural. It was a glorious sight—but every stomach was empty, every frame exhausted, every heart's longing limited to the longing for a lodging for the night. And what kind of a lodging would that prove ? The thoughts of the traveller dwelt more anxiously on that than on the beautiful prospect.

The path to the lonely inn lay through an olive grove ; it was as if one drove at home through gnarled willows. A dozen cripples were encamped before the inn ; the best of them looked, as Captain Marryat says, " Like the eldest son of hunger who has just attained his majority." Others were blind, or crept along on their hands, painfully dragging after them their paralyzed legs ; others again showed withered, fingerless hands. It was a spectacle of abject misery.

" *Eccellenza—miserabili !* " they whined, pointing to their stricken limbs. The hostess herself, barefooted, with untidy hair and dirty dress, received the guests. The doors were fastened with string, the floors were but half laid down with brick ; bats flew across the ceiling, and the smell in the room——!

" Lay the cloth in the stables ! " cried one of the travellers. " There at least one knows what one is breathing."

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The windows were opened to admit a little fresh air—but more quickly than the air came in the crippled limbs of the beggars, and the ceaseless whine, *miserabili*—*eccellenza*! On the walls were several inscriptions; half of them outcries against *la bella Italia*.

Supper was brought in. First came a watery soup seasoned with pepper and rancid oil; this latter ingredient was the principal part of the salad; stale eggs and roast cocks' combs were the most eatable things to be had. Even the wine had an after taste; it was a horrible mixture.

At night the luggage was piled up against the door, one of the travellers keeping watch while the others slept: it was the student's turn to watch; oh how sultry and close it was! The heat was oppressive, the gnats buzzed and stung, the *miserabili* outside whined in their dreams. "Travelling would be all very well," said the student, "if one had no body; or if one could rest, while the spirit wandered about. Wherever I come I feel a want which saddens my heart—a longing for something better than the moment brings—better, nay, the best: but what and where is it? In my own heart I know what it is I mean—would reach a happy—the happiest goal."

As he spoke the word, he was at home again. White curtains fell from the windows, and in the middle of the chamber stood the black coffin where he lay in the sleep of death. His wish was fulfilled; his body rested, his spirit wandered! "Count no man happy till he is in his grave!" said Solon—here the truth was proved anew.

Every corpse is a sphynx of immortality; and the sphynx here answered us in the words which the living man had written down only a few days before.

THE GOLOSHES OF FORTUNE.

Oh, mighty Death, thy silence wakes my fear ;
The only track thou leav'st us—churchyard grasses !
When shall thy Jacob's ladder re-appear,
Where our beloved, 'mid white-robed angels, passes ?

The world knew little of his heart's deep care,
Silently suffered, bravely, deeply hid ;
Stern duty's cross weighed daily heavier there
Than weighs the earth upon his coffin lid.

Two figures moved noiselessly about the room. We have seen them both before ; it was Care and the messenger of Fortune. They bent over the lifeless form.

"Do you see this ?" said Care. "What happiness have your goloshes brought to men ?"

"To him who is sleeping here, they have brought lasting happiness," was the reply.

"Not so," said Care. "He went of his own will. He was not called to die. His mind is not yet strong enough to grasp the treasures which, according to his destiny, he must yet grasp. I will bestow a gift on him."

She drew the goloshes from his feet : the death sleep ended—the student woke. Care vanished, and with her the goloshes vanished too. She doubtless looks upon them as her own property.



Five in One Shell.



HERE were once five peas in one shell ; they and the shell were green, so they thought the whole world was green too—which was very natural. The shell grew, and the peas grew ; they arranged themselves according to circumstances, and sat all in a row. The sun shone from without, and warmed the shell ; the rain made it clear and transparent ; it was soft and genial, light by day, and dark by night, just as it should be. The peas, as they sat inside, grew bigger and more thoughtful, for they must find something to do.

FIVE IN ONE SHELL.

"Are we to stay here for ever?" said one of them; "we shall get quite stiff with sitting so long. I feel as if there were something outside. I seem to have an instinct that there must be."

Weeks passed away; the peas turned yellow, the shells turned yellow, also. "The world has turned yellow," they said. It was quite natural they should say so.

Suddenly they felt a pull at the shell; it was gathered, and fell into a pair of hands, whence it slipped into a jacket pocket, together with some more full pods. "We shall open soon," they cried: it was what they were all longing for.

"I should like to know which of us will get on the best in the world," cried the first pea. "It will soon be known."

"Let what will happen, that is best," said the second pea.

Crack! the shell burst open, and the five peas rolled out into the clear sunshine. They were lying in the hand of a child—a little boy, who held them fast, saying that they would be just the thing for his popgun.

He put one in, and let off his gun. "Now, I am flying out into the wide world," said the pea; "catch me who can!" and away she flew.

"I," said the second, "shall fly straight up into the sun; that is the shell for me. I like something to look at." Off she went.

"We will go to sleep just where we fall," said the two next; "we shall manage to get on all the same." They were clever enough to fall on the ground even before they were put into the popgun, but they had to go in after all. "We shall get on the best in the world," they said. "Let what *will* happen, I am content," said the last, as it was shot out of the gun. It flew into a crack

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in an old board, under a garret window. The crack was filled with moss and loose earth, and the moss closed softly over the new comer. It lay still, a captive, but not forgotten by its Creator.

"Let what will happen," it said, "I am content."

In the garret chamber, there lived a poor woman, who went out daily to clean grates, chop wood small, and such like work. She was active and hard-working, but very poor. At home, in the garret, lay her only daughter, a delicate, sickly girl, who had been bedridden for a year, and seemed as if she could neither live nor die.

"She will follow her little sister," said the mother. "I had but the two children, and it was hard work to provide for them both; but the dear Lord helped me, and took one to Himself. I pray that I may keep the other, but it seems as if He will not have them parted, and my poor girl will go to her sister in Heaven."

But the sick girl lingered on, lying silent and patient all the long day through, while her mother was out working. It was spring time, and early one morning, as the poor woman was setting out for her day's work, the sun broke out warm and clear behind the little window, and cast its rays across the floor. The sick girl turned her eyes towards the window. "What is that little green thing, mother," she said, "that is peeping in through the window pane?"

Her mother went to the window, and opened it. "Why," she said, in surprise, "it is a little pea which has taken root, and is putting out green leaves. However could it have got into that crack? It will be quite a little garden for you to amuse yourself with."

The sick girl's bed was drawn close to the window, so that she could see the growing pea, and the mother went away to her work.

FIVE IN ONE SHELL.

"Mother, I think I shall get well again," the child said that night. "The sun has been shining on me so warmly all day long. The little pea thrives famously, and I feel that I shall thrive, too, and get well, and go out into the warm sunshine."

"God grant it!" said the mother; she did not think it was possible. She put a bit of stick by the little green shoot, which had given her child the thought of life and strength; she tied a piece of string from the window sill to the top of the sash, so that the plant might find something to cling to if it lived and grew.

And it did live; they could see it taller every day. "Look!" cried the mother, "it is putting out a blossom;" and, for the first time, the hope and trust that her child would recover rose in her heart. She reflected that the girl had spoken more cheerfully of late, and that for several mornings past she had raised herself in bed to eat her food, and looked, with radiant eyes at her little garden, which had all sprung up from one tiny pea plant. In another week she sat up a whole hour for the first time since her illness; her chair was drawn up in the warm sunshine, close to the open window, and the child's face wore a happy smile as she saw outside, on the climbing green, a pink and white pea blossom. She bent down to kiss the delicate leaves, and the day seemed like a festival.

"Our Heavenly Father Himself has planted and blessed it," said the mother, "for your joy and comfort, and for mine, too," and the flower bloomed out bright and radiant as one of God's angels.

But what of the other peas? Well, the one who flew out into the wide world, and cried out, "Catch me who can," fell into the spouting of the roof, and was eaten up by a pigeon, so that it was obliged to keep quiet for a

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while. The two idle ones met with the same fate, and certainly it was making themselves of use in a practical manner.

The fourth, who said she would fly up to the sun, fell in the gutter, and lay for weeks in the dirty water, swelling bigger and bigger.

"I am growing beautifully stout," it cried. "If I go on, I shall burst, and no pea in the world ever has done, or ever will do more than that." And the gutter agreed with her.



But the young girl stood at the garret window, with happy eyes, and cheeks bright with the rosy light of health. She folded her hands above the pea blossom, and thanked God for it.

"For my part," said the gutter, "I stand up for *my* pea.

—o—

Ole Luk Oie.



O one in the world knows so many stories as Ole Luk Oie; *he* is the one to tell tales.

Towards evening, when the children are sitting quiet and good round the table, or on their little chairs, in comes Ole Luk Oie.

He comes in very quietly, for he wears socks instead of shoes; he opens the door gently, and, puff! he blows a tiny handful of fine dust in the children's eyes. The very least bit in the world, just enough to make them shut their eyes, so that they cannot see him.* He steals behind them, and blows softly on their necks; that makes their heads feel heavy. He does not hurt them at all, for Ole Luk Oie is very fond of children; he only wants them to be quiet, and they never are quiet till they are put to bed; they must be still, or how can he tell his stories?

As soon as ever they are asleep Ole Luk Oie seats himself on their bed. He is richly dressed; his robe is of silk, but no one can tell what colour it is, for it shines scarlet and green and blue, just as he turns round. Under each arm he holds an umbrella; one is covered with pictures, and he opens that over the good children, so that they dream about the most beautiful things all night long. The other has no pictures at all, and he puts that up over naughty children, and they sleep all night without seeing anything, and in the morning they have nothing to tell.

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Now let us hear how Ole Luk Oie came every night one week to a little boy named Hjalmar, and what he told him. There are seven tales, because there are seven days in the week.

MONDAY.

"Now look at me," said Ole Luk Oie, one evening when he had put Hjalmar to bed; "I am going to decorate the room." He touched the flowers in the flower-pots, and they grew into tall trees that stretched their branches across the ceiling and round the walls, till the room looked like a beautiful conservatory. Every branch was full of flowers; all the flowers were lovelier than roses, fragrant, and as sweet to eat as preserve. The fruits shone like gold, and the cakes were bursting with raisins. It was lovely beyond description.

At the same time there arose a piteous cry from the table drawer where Hjalmar's school-books were kept. "What is all that about?" said Ole Luk Oie.

He went to the table and opened the drawer. It was the slate that was writhing and twisting about; there was a figure wrong in the sum, and the slate was ready to crack in two. The pencil leaped and tugged at the end of its string like a little dog: it wanted to help with the sum, but it could not. Then there came a moan from Hjalmar's copy-book; it was dreadful to hear it.

At the beginning of every line on the page stood a capital letter with a small one by it; that was the copy, and by these stood some more letters that thought they looked just the same. Hjalmar had written them, and they lay about as if they had tumbled in between the lines where they ought to have been standing sloping like this, with a graceful curve.



"Six swans, with golden crowns, ferried him across."

OLE LUK OIE.

"Look, this is the way you should hold yourselves," said the copy.

"Don't we wish we could?" said Hjalmar's letters: "but we cannot, we are too weak."

"Then you must take some physit," said Ole Luk Oie.

"No—no!" they cried, and stood up so prettily it was a pleasure to see them.

"We cannot tell any tales to-night," said Ole Luk Oie; "I must drill them. One, two: one, two;" and he drilled the letters till they stood up as gracefully as the copy.

But when Ole Luk Oie went away, and Hjalmar looked at them the next morning, they were all as crooked and ill-shaped as ever.

TUESDAY.

As soon as Hjalmar was gone to bed, Ole Luk Oie sprinkled all the furniture in the room with his magic dust, and they all began to talk at once, and every one talked about himself. Above the chest of drawers hung a large picture in a gilt frame; it was a landscape, with tall, old trees, flowers growing in the grass, and a broad river that flowed by a dark wood and past stately castles, till it reached the sea.

Ole Luk Oie touched the picture, and the birds began to sing, the trees waved to and fro, the clouds sailed by, throwing long shadows over the grass below. Then Ole Luk Oie lifted little Hjalmar into the frame; the child's feet sank in the soft grass, and there he stood. The sun shone down upon him, through the trees; he ran to the water's edge, and stepped into a little boat, which lay there waiting. It was painted red and white, the sails shone like silver, and six swans, with golden

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crowns on their heads, and a bright, blue star on their foreheads, ferried the boat across to the green forest, where all the trees were telling stories of robbers and witches, and the flowers were whispering about the pretty little elves, and what the butterflies had said to them.

Beautiful fishes, with scales like gold and silver, swam after the boat, and leaped up from time to time in the foaming water; two long files of birds, red and blue, small and great, flew overhead, and the gnats danced, and the cockchafers sang buzz! buzz! All of them wanted to follow Hjalmar, and all had a story to tell.

It was a splendid pleasure trip. Sometimes the woods were close and thick; sometimes they opened into beautiful gardens, sunlit and full of flowers. There Hjalmar saw lofty castles, built of glass and marble; or the balconies stood princesses—they were all little girls that he knew very well; he had played with them many a time. Each of them held out her hand, and offered him the nicest sugar heart that could be bought out of a cake shop. Hjalmar took hold of it as he sailed by, and the princess held her half tightly, so that it broke in two and each kept half; Hjalmar had the larger and the princess the smaller piece. At every castle gate a prince stood sentry; all of them shouldered little gold muskets, and rained down showers of raisins and toy soldiers. You could see in a moment that they were real princes.

Sometimes Hjalmar sailed through woods, sometimes through lofty halls, or busy towns; on his way he came to the place where his nurse lived, who was so kind to him when he was a baby boy. She nodded to him, and sang the pretty song she had written herself and sent to Hjalmar.

OLE LUK OIE.

"I think of thee by night and day,
My little lad—my darling child.
I kissed thee when I went away,
On thy sweet eyes—thy lips that smiled.
I heard thee lisp thy baby lore—
Thou wouldst not learn the word farewell.
God's angels guard thee evermore,
Till in His Heaven we meet and dwell!"

All the birds joined in, the flowers danced on their stems, and the tall trees nodded as if Ole Luk Oie were telling them also some of his stories.

WEDNESDAY.

How the rain poured down! Hjalmar could hear it in his sleep. When Ole Luk Oie opened the window, the water had risen up to the sill; out of doors, it looked like a great lake, and a stately ship was moored close to the house.

"If you like to come and have a sail with me, little Hjalmar," said Ole Luk Oie, "you can go to foreign lands to-night, and be back here again before morning."

Hjalmar found himself suddenly standing in the ship, dressed in his Sunday clothes. The weather was fine directly, and away they sailed through the streets, by the church, on a wide, rolling lake. On they went till there was no land in sight; they saw a flight of storks on their way to warmer countries, one stork behind another; it seemed an endless procession. The last stork was so tired that his wings could scarcely carry him; he was left further and further behind the others. At last he sank down with outspread wings, made a few faint, despairing strokes, but all in vain; lower he sank, till his feet touched the rigging of the ship; he slipped down from the sail, and, crash! there he lay on the deck.

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There the cabin boy caught him, and put him in the fowl pen among their hens, ducks, and turkeys. The poor stork stood quite bewildered in the midst of them.

"Look at this fellow," said the hens.

And the turkey cock puffed himself out, and asked the stork who he was, and the ducks waddled backwards, crying, "Quack, quack!"

The stork told them about Africa and the pyramids, about the ostrich that runs like a racer through the desert; but the ducks could not understand what he was talking about, and they quacked to each other, "We are all of the same opinion doubtless—we think he is utterly stupid!"

"Yes, certainly, he is stupid," said the turkey cock.

The stork was silent, and thought of Africa.

"You have a famous pair of lanky legs," said the turkey cock; "what do they cost a yard?"

"Quack, quack, quack," giggled all the ducks; but the stork pretended not to hear.

"You might certainly laugh, I think," said the turkey cock; "that was rather a clever speech of mine. But perhaps it was too deep for you. He is not a genius, is he? But we can be amusing among ourselves." And then he crowed, and the ducks cried, "Quack, quack!" It was wonderful how they enjoyed the joke.

But Hjalmar went to the fowl pen, opened the door, and called to the stork to come out to him on the deck. The bird felt rested now, and he nodded to Hjalmar, as if to thank him; then he spread his wings, and flew away to warmer lands; but the hens clucked, the ducks quacked, and the turkey cock turned red with anger.

"I'll have you made into soup to-morrow morning," said Hjalmar, and then he woke up and found himself lying in his little white bed.

OLE LUK OIE.

It was a wonderful voyage that Ole Luk Oie had taken him in the night.

THURSDAY.

"Do you know what?" said Ole Luk Oie—"don't be frightened—I am going to show you a little mouse."

He held out his hand, where there sat an elegant little mouse. "She is come to invite you to the wedding," said Ole Luk Oie. "Two young mice are going to enter the holy state of matrimony this very night. They live under the floor of your mother's store room. It is a beautiful house for them."

"But how shall I get through the little mouse-hole in the floor?" said Hjalmar.

"Let me manage all that," answered Ole Luk Oie. "I'll make you nice and tiny." He touched Hjalmar with his magic powder, and the child grew less and less till he was not an inch long. "Now, you can borrow the tin soldier's clothes; they will fit you nicely, I think, and it looks well to wear a uniform when one goes out to a party."

"Yes, indeed!" said Hjalmar, and in a moment he was dressed like the smartest of tin soldiers. "Will you be so kind as to sit down in your mother's thimble?" said the little mouse; "I shall then have the honour of pulling you along."

"Is it possible that your ladyship will take so much trouble yourself?" said Hjalmar, and they drove off to the mouse's wedding.

First of all they went under the floor, and entered a long passage, just high enough for the thimble to stand upright; the whole passage was lighted with phosphor.

"Is it not beautiful here?" said the mouse, as she drew him forward. "The passage has been smeared with bacon rind. Nothing can be more delightful."

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They then entered the bridal hall. All the lady-mice stood on the right hand, whispering and giggling as if they were turning each other into ridicule; on the left stood the gentlemen-mice, stroking their moustachios with their paws; and in the middle of the hall stood the bridal pair, in the hollow rind of a cheese. They kissed each other in a perfectly dreadful way before all the company, for it was their betrothal, and they were to be married immediately.

More and more visitors arrived; one mouse trod upon another, and the bridal pair had placed themselves in the doorway, so that one could neither get in nor out. The room, as well as the passage, had been smeared with bacon rind; that was the whole entertainment; but a pea was brought out for dessert, in which a mouse of the bride's family had nibbled the name of the bridal pair—the initials, that is. It was something quite out of the common way. All the mice said that it was a very pretty wedding, and that they had spent a very pleasant evening.

Hjalmar drove home again; he had certainly been in very good society. On the other hand, he had been obliged to be made very small, and creep through a mouse-hole, and borrow his tin soldier's uniform.

FRIDAY.

"It is incredible how many elderly people there are who would be glad to see me," said Ole Luk Oie, "especially those who have done any wicked action. 'Dear, good Ole!' they cry, 'we cannot close an eye all night; all our evil deeds sit on the bed, like little imps, and sprinkle us with boiling water. Do come and drive them away, and give us a good night's rest."

OLE LUK OIE.

We will pay for it willingly; the money is all ready by the window.' But I don't come for money," said Ole Luk Oie.

"What shall we do to-night?" said Hjalmar.

"I don't know whether you would care to go to another wedding—it is a different kind of a wedding from the one we saw last night. Your sister's doll, Hermann, the one that is dressed like a man, is going to marry the other doll, Bertha. It is Bertha's birthday into the bargain, so that they will receive an immense number of presents."

"Oh, I know that of old," said Hjalmar. "Whenever the dolls want new clothes, my sister lets them be married, or keep their birthday. They have done that a hundred times."

"Yes, but to-night is the hundred and first wedding, and when the hundred and first is over, it is all finished. So this will be extremely grand. Only look!"

Hjalmar looked at the table. The dolls' house was lighted up from top to bottom, the tin soldiers were drawn up in front and presented arms. The bridal pair were sitting on the floor, leaning against the table leg. They looked very thoughtful, as well they might.

When the wedding was over, all the furniture in the room joined in the following song. It had been written by the lead pencil, and went to the tune of the drummers' tattoo—

"Ring out the song into the air,
Ring out, 'Hurrah, the bridal pair!'
The bridegroom bold, the bride so fair,
Are made of kid, fine, soft, and rare.
Lift high your voices, banish care,
And sing, 'Hurrah, the bridal pair!'"

The presents were then brought out; the young

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couple had begged that no eatables might be given to them, because they had enough in each other's love.

"Shall we buy a country house, or shall we travel abroad?" said the bridegroom.

The swallow who had travelled a great deal, and the old brood hen who had brought up five hatches of chickens, were consulted on the point. The swallow spoke of the beautiful, warm countries where the rich grapes hung heavy on the vine, the air was mild and pure, and the mountains glowed with colours unknown to us.

"But they have no red cabbage," said the hen. "I once spent a summer in the country with my chickens; there was a sand-heap where we could scratch and pick, and we had permission to walk in a cabbage garden. Oh, how delicious it was! Nothing could be more lovely."

"But one cabbage stalk is just like another," said the swallow; "and then it is such bad weather here."

"One gets used to that," said the hen.

"But it is cold, and winter brings the frost."

"That is good for the cabbage," said the hen; "and then it is warm sometimes. Four years ago the summer lasted for four weeks; it was so hot one could not breathe. Besides, we have no venomous insects as they have over there, and no robbers either. The man must be a villain who does not think our country the best: he does not deserve to live in it." Then the hen wept, and continued, "I, too, have travelled. I once rode more than twelve miles in a coop. Believe me, there is no pleasure whatever in travelling."

"The hen is a sensible person," said Bertha. "I do not think much of mountains myself; it is only going up and then coming down again. No, let us

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settle on the sand-heap before the door, and walk about in the cabbage garden."

SATURDAY.

"Now, shall I hear any tales?" said little Hjalmar, when Ole Luk Oie had put him to sleep.

"We shall have no time for tales to-night," said Ole Luk Oie, opening his large umbrella. "Just look at these little Chinamen!" And the umbrella looked like a China dish, with blue trees, and pointed bridges with little Chinamen on, who stood and nodded their heads.

"We must have the whole world tidied and smartened up for to-morrow," said Ole Luk Oie; "it is Sunday, you know—I must go to all the church steeples and see if the little goblins have polished the bells nicely to make them ring out clear and sweet. Then I must hurry off to the fields and see whether the wind has blown the dust off the leaves and blades of grass; then—and that is the hardest piece of work of all—I have to take down all the stars and rub them up well. I put them in my apron, but first they have to be numbered, and so have the little holes in the sky where they are fixed; for, if they are not put back into the right holes, they would not fit, but would come tumbling down again, and we should have too many shooting stars."

"Now, I'll tell you what, Mr. Ole Luk Oie," said an old portrait which was hanging on one of the walls in Hjalmar's bed-room; "I am Hjalmar's great-great-grandfather. I am much obliged to you for telling the child tales, but you really must not confuse his ideas. The stars cannot tumble down. They are worlds,

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heavenly bodies like our earth ; that is the only good of them."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Great-great-grandfather," said Ole Luk Oie — "extremely obliged. Certainly you are the head of the family, the very founder of it ; but I am older than you. I am a world-old pagan ; the Greeks and Romans called me the God of Dreams. I have had, and I shall always have, access to the dwellings of the noblest, and the lowliest, and I can meet on an equal footing with both. Now, you may finish the tale yourself !" And away went Ole Luk Oie, umbrella and all.

"Well I never ! One may not even express one's opinion now-a-days," said the old portrait.

Then Hjalmar awoke.

SUNDAY.

"Good evening," said Ole Luk Oie. Hjalmar nodded, and ran to turn the portrait of his great-great-grandfather's face to the wall, so that it might not interrupt, as it had done the night before. "Now you must tell me some tales," he said, "about the five peas that lived in a shell ; and about the cock's foot that paid court to the hen's foot ; and the darning-needle that gave herself such airs that she fancied herself a sewing-needle."

"It is possible to have too much of a good thing," said Ole Luk Oie. "You know that I like showing you things best. I will show you my brother. His name is Ole Luk Oie, like mine ; but he never comes to any one more than once. When he comes to you he will take you on his horse and tell you a story ; he only knows two : one is so beautiful that no one in the world has

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ever imagined anything half so lovely, and the other is so awful and terrible that it cannot be described by any one else."

Ole Luk Oie lifted Hjalmar up to the window, and told him to look out. "Now you can see my brother!" he said. "His name is Death. Look, he is not half so ugly as they paint him in the picture-books. What they take for a bony skeleton is only the silver embroidery on his beautiful hussar's uniform; his long black velvet mantle flies behind his horse. See how fast he gallops!"

Hjalmar looked out, and saw how the second Ole Luk Oie sped by, and how he took up young and old on to his horse. He placed some before him and some behind, but he asked them all first, "How does it stand with your mark-book?"

"Very well," they all cried with one voice. "Let me look for myself," he said; and every one was obliged to hand up his book. Those which had "excellent," or "first-class" written in them, were lifted up in front of the rider and heard the beautiful story; but those with "middling," or "pretty good" were sent to the back, and heard the horrible story. They cried and trembled, and tried to jump down from the horse; but they could not stir, for they were all spell-bound in their places.

"Why, Death is the finest Ole Luk Oie of the two!" cried little Hjalmar; "I am not one bit afraid of him!"

"No more you need be," said Ole Luk Oie, "if you will take care to keep a good mark-book."

"Yes, now, that is improving," said the great-great-grandfather's portrait; "it is of some use after all to express one's opinion." And he was quite contented.

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There, that is the story of Ole Luk Oie ; and I hope he will tell you some more himself this very night.

The Ugly Duckling.



OW gloriously beautiful the country was ! It was summer time ; the corn was yellow, the oats were green, the hay was stacked up in the fragrant meadows ; the stork walked proudly about on his long red legs, talking Egyptian to himself, the language he had learned from his mother. Great woods stood round the corn-fields and meadow lands ; and hidden in the woods were still, deep lakes. Yes, it was very lovely out in the country.

An old farm house stood there, bathed in the pleasant sunshine ; a deep moat ran round it, and over the wall great burdock leaves hung, and grew down to the water's edge. The leaves were so large that a little child could stand upright under some of them. The whole place was as wild as the heart of a great forest. This was the spot in which a duck had chosen to place her nest ; she sat faithfully on her eggs all day long, but she was beginning to feel rather tired of waiting ; no one came to pay her a visit ; the other ducks preferred swimming about the moat to sitting down and gossiping with her under the burdock leaves.

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At last one egg after another chipped and opened, and out came a little head from every shell. "Peep ! peep !" they cried.

"Quack ! quack !" said the mother, and they quacked as well as they could, turning their bright eyes eagerly from side to side of the green leaves. The mother let them look about as much as they liked, for green is good for the eyes.

"How large the world is !" they cried, for they had a great deal more room now than they had in the egg.

"Do you think this is the whole world ?" said the mother ; "the world reaches beyond the other side of the garden, right into the parson's field, but I have never been there myself. Have I got you all together now ?" she continued, standing up—"no ; not quite all. The largest egg is still left : how much longer is it going to be, I wonder ? I declare I am quite tired of it," and down she sat again.

"Well, how are you getting on ?" said an old duck, who had come to pay her a visit.

"I'm waiting for this one egg," said the duck ; "it will not chip. But just look at the others : are they not the very prettiest little ducklings that ever were seen ? They are all extremely like their father—by the way, the naughty creature never comes to see me."

"Let me look at the egg that won't chip," said the old duck. "Take my word for it, it is a turkey's egg. I was once taken in in the very same way myself, and was in endless trouble about the little creature. It was frightened at the sight of the water ; I could not get it in ; I clucked and quacked, but it was all of no use. Let me see the egg. Oh, yes, that's a turkey's egg. Let it alone, and begin to teach the other children how to swim."

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"I will sit upon it a little bit longer," said the duck; "as I have sat so long, I may as well sit a few days more."

"As you please," said the old duck, and away she swam.

At last the large egg chipped and opened. "Peep! peep!" cried the little bird, and crept out of the shell. It was very big and very ugly. The mother looked at it. "It is certainly an enormous duckling," she said; "none of the others looked like that. I wonder if it is a young turkey! I shall very soon find out, however, when we come to the water. It shall 'go in if I have to push it in myself.'"

The next day was warm and lovely; the sun shone bright and golden on the green burdock leaves; the mother duck and her brood of little ones went down to the water's edge. Splash! she jumped into the water: "Quack! quack!" she called, and one after another the ducklings tumbled in. The water closed above their heads, but they rose to the surface again, and swam about splendidly; their little legs moved of themselves. The grey, ugly duckling swam with them.

"No, that's no turkey-poult," said the duck; "look how nicely it uses its legs; how upright it sits! It is my own child. It is pretty after all when you look at it closely. Quack! quack! follow me. I am going to take you out into the world, and introduce you to the duck-yard. Keep close to me, so that no one may tread on you, and keep out of the way of the cats."

They entered the duck-yard. A great quarrel was going on at the moment, for two families were fighting over an eel's head, which the cat finally carried off.

"See, that's the way of the world," said the mother duck, and whetted her beak, for she, too, would have

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liked the eel's head. "Now use your legs, and see that you quack nicely, and be sure that you bow your heads to that old duck yonder. She is the most aristocratic person here. She is of Spanish descent, that is why she is so fat; and look at that piece of red rag round her leg. That is most beautiful: it is the highest distinction to which any duck can attain. It means that her owners do not wish to lose her, and that she is to be known at once, both by men and animals. Now remember. Don't turn your feet in—a well-bred duckling always turns its feet outwards, like its father and mother;—look, this way! Now bow your heads, and say quack."

The ducklings did as they were bid, but the other ducks turned round and looked at them. "Look there!" they said aloud; "now we have got another set of new comers, as if there were not enough of us already! And, oh! look at that one! No; we really will not have *him* here." And one of them flew straight up to the ugly duckling, and bit its neck.

"Let it alone," said the mother; "it isn't doing any harm."

"But it is too big, and too odd-looking," said the duck, "and it must be well pecked."

"They are pretty children that the mother has brought," said the old duck with the rag round her leg; "all nice-looking, except that one. That is certainly not a success. I wish she could finish it off a little better."

"Impossible, your ladyship!" said the mother duck; "it is not pretty, but it has a good disposition, and swims as well as any of the others; indeed, I may say it swims better. I think it will grow up pretty, and get rather smaller in time. It has lain too long in

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the egg, and so it is not very well shaped." She pecked at its neck a little, and smoothed down its feathers—"And then it is a drake," she continued, "so that looks are not of so much consequence; it will get on pretty well."

"The other ducklings are pretty," said the old Spanish duck. "Well now, young ones, make yourselves at home; and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it to me."

And so they felt themselves at home. But the poor duckling which had been the last to come out of the shell, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed, and made game of by ducks and fowls alike. "It is too big," they all said, and the turkey, who had been born with spurs on, and fancied he was an emperor, puffed himself out like a ship in full sail, and bore down on the poor little creature, gabbling with fury, and turning red in the face. The ugly duckling did not know where to run to; it was wretched because of its ugliness, and because it was laughed at by all the poultry-yard.

Days passed on, and its life grew harder to bear. Everybody chased and drove it away; even its brothers and sisters used to say, "Oh, you ugly creature, I wish the cat had you!" And the mother cried, "I wish you were out of the way!" The ducks bit it, the fowls pecked it, and the farm servants kicked at it as they passed by.

It ran away at last and flew over the hedge; the little birds in the bushes flew away in terror. "That is because I am so ugly," thought the duckling: it closed its eyes and ran blindly on till it came to the wide moorland where the wild ducks live. Here it lay all night long, weary and sorrowful.

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Towards morning the wild ducks flew round and looked at their new companion. "Whatever sort of a duck are you?" they cried; and the ugly duckling got up and bowed to them all round as politely as he could.

"You are extremely ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that does not signify to us, so long as you do not wish to marry into our family." Poor little thing! Marrying was far enough from its thoughts: all it hoped for was to get leave to lie on the sedge and drink a little of the marsh water.

Two days long it lay and rested; the next day there came up two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been very long out of their shell, and they were very saucy.

"I say, comrade," they cried, "you are so downright ugly, that we are rather taken with you. What do you say to joining us and being a rover? Over yonder in the next moor, there are some sweetly pretty wild geese, all of them unmarried, and all of them can cackle. You are in a fair way to make your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Piff! paff!" sounded in the air above them. The two wild geese fell dead among the reeds, and a blood-red stain tinged the quiet water. "Piff! paff!" it rang out again, and flocks of wild geese rose in terror from the sedge. A great chase was going forward. The sportsmen had closed in round the moor, some had even climbed the branches of the trees which stretched across the rushes. The blue smoke rose in thin clouds among the leaves, and spread far over the water: up ran the dogs, splash, splash, among the bending reeds and rushes. The poor duckling cowered down in terror; it tried to hide its head under its wing; but at the same moment a large, savage-looking dog stood over

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it: his hot tongue was stretched out, his eyes gleamed with cruel eagerness, he sniffed round the duckling, showed his sharp, glittering teeth, and, splash, splash, on he went, without doing it any harm.

"Thank God!" cried the little duckling. "I am so ugly that even the dog will not bite me!" and it lay still while the shots whizzed through the sedge, and gun after gun was fired.

It was dusk before the place was quiet again: the duckling was afraid to stir, and waited many hours before it looked round, and hastened away from the moor as fast as it could run. It ran through fields and meadows, where such a storm was raging that it could hardly keep its footing.

Towards night it reached a wretched looking little hut, so old and tumbledown that it did not know on which side to fall first, and that was the only thing that kept it standing. The storm howled and raged round the duckling; it was obliged to lie close to the ground, for it could not stand against the tempest. Suddenly it noticed that the door had come off one of its hinges, and hung so awry that it could creep through into the room; and so it did. In the hut lived a woman, with her cat and her hen. And the cat, whom she called her little son, could set up his little back, and purr; he could even send out sparks if you stroked his fur the wrong way. The hen had neat little legs, and was named, "Henny Shortlegs:" she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as much as if she were her daughter.

In the morning they found the ugly duckling; the cat began to purr, and the hen clucked loudly.

"What is that?" said the woman, looking round. She could not see very well, and she thought it was a

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fat duck which had lost its way. "That's a good find," she cried. "I shall get some duck's eggs now. I hope it is not a drake. We must try it."

So the ugly duckling was taken in on trial for three weeks, but no eggs were to be seen. The cat was master of the house, and the hen was mistress. She always said "We and the world," for she thought they two were half the world, and the best half, too. The duckling thought there might be another opinion on that matter, but the hen would not hear of it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she said.

"No."

"Then you will have the goodness to hold your tongue." And the cat said, "Can you set up your back and send out sparks?"

"No."

"Then you should not allow yourself to have an opinion when sensible people are speaking."

The duckling sat in the corner, sad and lonely. The fresh sweet air and the golden sunshine stole in, and a great longing rose within it to see the water again. At last it ventured to say so to the hen.

"What can you be thinking of?" she answered. "You have nothing to do, and that is why you take up such whims and fancies. Lay eggs, or purr, and they will all go away."

"But it is so beautiful to swim on the water," said the duckling; "so glorious to let it close over your head, and to dive down in the depth."

"It sounds like a nice amusement," said the hen. "I should think you are out of your mind. Just ask the cat—he's the cleverest animal I know—whether he likes swimming about on the water, and diving down in the depth. I will not speak of myself. Ask the

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mistress—no one in the world is wiser than she is; do you think *she* has any desire to swim about on the water and let it close above her head?"

"You do not understand me," said the duckling.

"Not understand you! Then pray who *does* understand you? I suppose you do not imagine yourself cleverer than the cat and the mistress? I will not speak of myself. Don't fill your head with such nonsense, child. Thank heaven for all the blessings round you. Haven't you a warm room, and companions from whom you can learn a great deal? But you are a chatterbox, and there is no pleasure to be had in your society. I tell you unpleasant truths, like the sincere friend that I am. Give your mind to laying eggs or purring, or sending out sparks."

"I think I shall go out into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Pray do," said the hen.

The duckling went out, ran down to the water and dived under; every living thing looked down upon it for its ugliness.

Autumn came on. The woodland leaves turned brown and yellow; the wind seized them and tossed them to and fro, and overhead the air was keen and cold. The clouds hung heavy with hail and snow; on the signpost, stood a raven, and he croaked hoarsely from the cold: it was enough to make one freeze to think of it. The poor little duckling was miserably off. One evening—the sun had just set gloriously—a flock of tall, stately birds came slowly out from among the bushes; the duckling had never seen anything so beautiful; they were all dazzlingly white, with arched necks; it was a flock of swans. A strange mysterious cry broke from them; slowly they spread out their splendid wings, rose

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high in air and flew away from the cold moorland to warmer shores and sunny seas. Higher and higher they rose; the outcast, ugly duckling was thrilled with a nameless longing, unfelt before. It spun round in the water like a wheel, stretched its neck high into the air after the flying birds, and uttered such a loud wild cry that the sound made it shiver.

It could not forget the happy, beautiful birds: when they were out of sight, it dived deep down in the water, and when it rose again it seemed beside itself. It did not know the name of the birds, or whither they were flying; but it loved them as it had never loved any one before. It had no thought of envy. How could it ever dream of wishing such loveliness for itself? It would have been glad if even the ducks would have let it stay with them, poor ugly creature.

The winter was very, very cold; the duckling was obliged to keep swimming about to prevent itself from being frozen; but every night the hole in which it swam grew smaller and smaller. The ice cracked and split with the frost; the duckling had to move its legs nimbly lest the ice should close round it. At last it grew weary, lay quite still, and was frozen fast in the ice-bound pool.

Early in the morning a peasant saw the frozen bird, ran on the pool, broke up the ice with his wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife.

The bird came to itself again, and the children wanted to play with it. But the duckling thought they were going to hurt it, and in its terror it flew straight into the milk-can, sending the milk in showers on to the floor. The woman clapped her hands and the duckling flew on to the butter-jar, and then into the flour-bag, and then out of doors. What a fright it looked to be sure! The woman screamed and threw the tongs after it; the

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children ran, shouting and laughing, about to catch it. Luckily for it, it fell among the shrubs into the new-fallen snow, and lay there worn out and broken-hearted.

But this would be too sad a story if I were to tell all that the poor duckling had to suffer in the bitter winter. The spring-time came at last, and found it lying in the reeds upon the moor. The sun shone out warm and golden, the larks sang; it was a lovely spring.

Then the duckling spread out its wings; they seemed broader and stronger than before, and bore him swiftly on, till, almost before it knew what had happened, it found itself in a large garden, where the elder trees were in blossom and hung down their long branches to the water's edge. How beautiful 'it was—how bright with spring! and see, slowly out of the coppice sailed three splendid swans, rustling their feathers and resting lightly on the rippling water! The duckling knew the beautiful birds again, and a strange sorrow and gladness rose together in its heart.

"I will fly to meet them—the royal birds. They will kill me because I dare to approach them, ugly as I am. But let it be so. Better to be killed by them than bitten by the ducks, pecked at by the fowls, driven away by the servant maid, and tortured with cold and hunger in the long, long winter." And it ran down to the water and sailed out to meet the swans. They saw it now, and bore swiftly down upon it with rustling wings. "Kill me, if you will," said the poor bird. It bent its head towards the lake and waited for the death-stroke. But what did it see beneath it in the clear blue lake? It saw the image of itself—no longer the clumsy, hideous bird, grey and mis-shapen, but a stately, snow-white swan

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It matters little that one is born in a duck-yard when one has come out of a swan's egg.

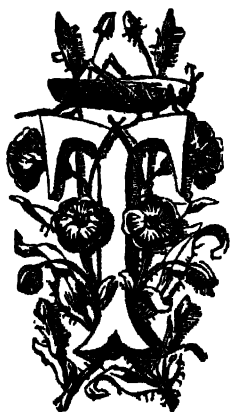
It felt lifted above all the care and sorrow that it had borne; and knew for the first time its own happiness by the splendour around it. And the tall swans swam round it and caressed it with their bills.

Some little children came running into the garden, and threw crumbs of bread and corn into the water. "See, there is a new one!" cried the youngest child. "Yes, there is a new one!" answered the others joyously. They clapped their hands, danced about, and ran to fetch their father and mother to see the beautiful new bird. Bread and cake were thrown out to it in the water; and every one said, "The new one is the most beautiful." "It is so young and stately." And the three swans bowed before it.

Then the young swan was shy and ashamed. It hid its head under its white wing and felt too happy—but had no thought of pride. It remembered how it had been mocked and persecuted, and now every one said it was lovelier than all besides. The elder tree waved her boughs to it, and the warm sun caressed it with its golden light. Then it lifted up its beautiful neck, fluttered its wings, and said from the fulness of its heart, "Oh, I never even dreamed of such happiness when I was an ugly duckling!"



Under the Willow-Tree.



THE little town of Kjøge, in Zealand, lies close to the sea: it is a bleak and barren place; open fields stretch round it, and the green forest is far away. The sea is always beautiful, but even the sea might be more beautiful than it is here; and yet, when one calls a place home, there is always something about it which has power to waken loving, regretful longing, even among the most beautiful scenery in the world. And it must be allowed that it is rather pretty in the summer-time on the outskirts of the little town: a few poor gardens line the margin of the leaping brook that hurries on to pour itself into the sea. The two little children who were fighting bravely through the hedge of gooseberry bushes to reach each other, thought it was a beautiful place; especially under the old willow-tree. There was an elder-tree in one of their gardens, and a willow-tree in the other; they loved the willow best, though it grew so near the waterside, and they might easily have fallen in. But God's eyes watch over the little ones, or else it would be a poor look-out for them. They were, however, very careful; indeed, the boy was

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so frightened at water, that no one could ever persuade him to go near the sea—not even in the summer, when all the other children were paddling among the waves. He was finely teased about it, and he had to bear that patiently. One day, Joanna, the neighbour's little girl, dreamed that she was sailing in a boat, and that Kanute waded out to her; so deep, that the water rose up to his



neck, up to his hair, and then closed over him. From the moment when little Kanute heard this dream, he never let the other boys tease him any more; he dare go in the water, for had not Joanna dreamed it? He never really did go in, but the dream was the pride of his life.

The children's parents often met, and the children played together in the gardens, and in the avenue of

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willows that ran round the ramparts; the willows were not much to look at, with their wind-beaten, stunted boughs, but then they were planted for use and not for show. The old willow-tree in the garden was really lovely; and that was where the two children sat. In the town itself is a large market-place, and at the fair it was filled with booths and stalls, decked out with gay ribbons, boots, toys, and everything one can wish for. There was always a great crowd, and generally it rained heavily, so that the steam from the farmers' grey-frieze coats rose up in clouds and mixed with the delicious smeli from the cakes and gingerbread-stalls. The best of all was, that the man who sold the cakes used to lodge at Kanute's father's while the fair lasted; sometimes he would give the little lad a stray gingerbread or two, and then Joanna always got her share.

Better even than that—the old man could tell tales about everything under the sun, even about his own gingerbread; and one night he told the children a tale which made such a deep impression on them, that they never forgot it. Perhaps it will be as well that you should know it too, especially as it is short.

"On the counter of my shop," said the old man, "there lay two gingerbread-cakes; one was in the shape of a man with a hat on his head, and the other was a young lady with no hat. They lay face upward, because that is the proper way to look at them—no one would think of looking at the wrong side of a gingerbread-cake. The man had a bitter almond on his left side—that was his heart; but the young lady was made of nothing but honey. They lay on the counter for samples, and they laid there so long that they fell in love with each other, but neither of them said so, and yet it is absolutely necessary to say so if anything is to come of it.

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“‘He is a man—he must speak first,’ she said; ‘I ask no more than to know that my love is returned.’”



“His thoughts were much bolder; that is always the way with men. He dreamed that he was a real street-boy with his pocket full of coppers, and that he bought the young lady and ate her up.”

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"Days and weeks passed by; they lay there silent on the counter; the young lady's thoughts grew softer and tenderer still. 'It is enough for me,' she sighed, 'that I have lain on the same counter.' And with that she broke right in two.

"'If she had only known of my love she would have held out a little longer,' he thought.

"That is the tale," said the old man; "and here they are, both of them. They are remarkable because of their life-story, and because of their silent love that never came to anything. Here—you may have them." He gave Joanna the young man, who was quite whole, and Kanute had the broken pieces of the young lady.

The children were so touched by the story that they could not find it in their hearts to eat the two lovers. The next day they went into the churchyard and sat down on the low stone wall, which is all overgrown with luxuriant ivy, winter and summer through. They set up the cakes in the sunshine among the green leaves, and told the story to a group of children—told about the silent love that was no good to any one. All the children praised the story; but as they gazed at the gingerbread couple, a big boy made a dart at the young lady—quite on purpose—and ate her up. Kanute and Joanna cried bitterly, and then—most likely, so that the poor sweetheart should not be left all alone in the world—then they ate *him* up; but they never forgot the story.

The children were always together; sometimes under the elder tree, sometimes under the willow tree; and the little girl sang the prettiest songs, in a voice as clear as a bell. Kanute had not a note in his voice, but he knew the words, and that is something. The people in Kjøge, even the well-to-do woman who kept the fancy

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shop, used to stop and listen when Joanna sang "The little maid has a pretty voice of her own," they used to say.

Those were happy days, but they could not last for ever. The neighbours had to separate; Joanna's mother died, and her father made up his mind to marry again. A good situation, as light porter, was offered to him in Kopenhagen, and the day came for them all to part. Tears were shed all round; indeed, the children cried as if their hearts were breaking; but the old people promised to write to each other at least once a year.

Kanute was bound apprentice to a shoemaker. He was a big boy now, and could not be allowed to be idle any longer. Then came his Confirmation day. Oh! how he longed to be in Kopenhagen with little Joanna! but he was obliged to stay in Kjøge. He had never been to Kopenhagen in his life, though it was only a few miles distant. When the sky was clear, he could see the church steeples quite plainly; and on his Confirmation day he saw the golden cross on S. Mary's spire glitter in the sunshine. Oh! how often he thought of Joanna! Did she ever think of him, he wondered? Yes! Towards Christmas there came a letter for his parents from Joanna's father. They were getting on very well in Kopenhagen, and all their good fortune came from Joanna's wonderful voice. She had an engagement at the theatre, where all the plays were sung, the letter said; and she earned a salary already. The dollar enclosed was for her old friends in Kjøge, as a Christmas box. They were to drink to her health. This last sentence, Joanna had written with her own hand, and underneath came a postscript, "Remember me to Kanute." The whole family cried

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over it : there was nothing certainly to cry for, but their tears were tears of joy.

Joanna had been in Kanute's thoughts all day long, and now he knew she thought of him ; the nearer he was to being out of his time, the more clearly he saw that he loved her dearly, and that she must be his wife. Then a smile would cross his lips ; his thread flew faster, and his foot pressed firmly against the knee strap ; the awl would prick his finger till the blood came, but what did that signify ? He was not going to play the tongue-tied lover ; the gingerbread cake had been a lesson to him.

His 'prentice days were over now, and his knapsack filled. Now, for the first time in his life, he was to go to Kopenhagen, for he had found a place there. How surprised and overjoyed Joanna would be ! She was seventeen now, and he was nineteen.

He thought of buying a golden ring for her in Kjøge, but he remembered that he could get such things much better in Kopenhagen ; so he bade his mother and father good-bye, and late on a rainy autumn afternoon he turned his back on his native village, and set off towards the great town. The leaves were falling from the trees ; he was wet through by the time he reached his new master's. The next Sunday he went out to visit Joanna's father. He put on his new hat and suit of clothes ; they fitted him very well, and he had never worn a hat before. He found the house, and went up one pair of stairs after another ; it was enough to turn any one giddy to see how the people lived, one room over another, high in the air.

It was a comfortable room, and Joanna's father received him very kindly ; his wife was a stranger, but she held out her hand, and asked him to stay tea with them.

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"Joanna will be glad to see you," said the father. "You have grown quite a fine young man. Now you shall see her—ah! she is the joy of my life. She has a room of her own, for which she pays us herself."

The man knocked at Joanna's door, just as if he were a stranger, and then they all went in. How



elegant everything was! There certainly was no room like it in Kjöge: the queen herself could not have a pleasanter one, Kanute thought. There were window curtains down to the very ground, and a carpet and a velvet chair; not to speak of flowers and pictures, and a great mirror as large as a door; one felt almost afraid to enter. Kanute saw all this with one glance,

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and yet he seemed to see nothing but Joanna. She was grown up now, and very different from what Kanute remembered her. There was no maiden in Kjoge half so beautiful; how ladylike she was, and how distantly she looked at Kanute!—only for a moment though, for then she rushed towards him as if she were going to embrace him. She did not do so, but it was very near it.

Yes, she was glad to see the friend of her childhood, and yet the tears came into her eyes: there was so much to hear and to tell; she asked after Kanute's father and mother, and after the elder and the willow tree. "Mother elder" and "Father willow," she called them, as if they were alive, and they were almost as good. She remembered the gingerbread cakes too, and their silent love, and how they lay on the counter till they broke in two. She laughed heartily as she recalled the story, but the blood flamed high in Kanute's cheeks, and his heart beat loud and fast. No, she was not proud! It was she herself—Kanute noticed that—who prompted her parents to ask him to stay; she poured out his tea, and handed him his cup.

After tea she read something aloud out of a book, and it seemed to Kanute that all she read spoke of his love; it chimed in so fully with his secret thoughts. Then she sang a simple song, but when she sang it, it sounded like a story over which she poured out all her heart. Oh, yes! she loved Kanute. Tears rolled down his cheeks; he could not help it; he could not find a single word to say. It seemed as if he were spell bound, and yet she pressed his hand, and said, "You have a good heart, Kanute—stay always as you are now."

That was a night apart—it was impossible to sleep after it, and so Kanute found.

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"I hope you won't quite forget us," said Joanna's father as he wished the young man good night. "Don't let the winter go by without coming to see us." Kanute thought that was as much as to say come next Sunday, so he went. But every night after working hours—and he worked by candle-light—Kanute went into the town, walked through the street where Joanna lived, and looked up at her windows. They were almost always lighted up; once he saw her shadow cross the blind; that was a happy evening. His master's wife was not too well pleased at his going out every night, gadding about, as she called it, but the master only smiled. "Let him be—he is but a youngster," he said.

"We shall meet on Sunday," thought Kanute, "and I will tell her then how dearly I love her, and that she must be my own dear wife. I know I am only a poor shoemaker's lad, but I shall work and strive, and rise to be a master shoemaker: yes, I must tell her all that: there's no good in silent love, I have learnt that from the gingerbread cakes."

Sunday came, and Kanute paid his visit; but unluckily they were all going out to spend the evening, and they were obliged to tell him so. Joanna pressed his hand and said: "Have you been to the theatre yet? You *must* go. I shall sing next Wednesday, and if you are at liberty on that day I will send you a ticket; my father knows where your master lives."

How amiable it was of her! And on Wednesday morning Kanute received a sealed envelope, without a word of writing, but enclosing the ticket, and at night he found himself for the first time in his life in the theatre. What did he see? He saw Joanna; how lovely and graceful she looked! To be sure she was married to a stranger, but that was only the play; nothing but acting,

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Kanute knew that, for if it were true how could she have had the heart to send him a ticket just to look on at it? Every one clapped his hands, and even Kanute cried "Bravo!"

The king himself smiled on Joanna as if he enjoyed her beautiful voice; ah, how insignificant Kanute felt! but yet he loved her truly, and she loved him too; but it is for the man to speak first, as the gingerbread young lady thought: there was really a great deal in that story.

When Sunday came round he went again; Joanna was alone, and received him: nothing could be more fortunate.

"It is a good thing you are come," she said; "I was going to send my father to you; but I had a presentiment that you would come to-night: for I must tell you that I am going to France next Friday. I must go, if I am ever to make anything of my voice."

It seemed to Kanute that the whole room turned round; his eyes were hot and dry, but he felt as if his heart were breaking. It was impossible to hide his sorrow. "You good, kind heart!" said Joanna; and then his tongue was loosened, and he told her how dearly he loved her, and begged her to be his wife. As he spoke he saw her colour change from red to white; she dropped his hand, and answered gravely and sadly. "Do not make yourself and me unhappy, Kanute. I shall always be a good sister to you, on whom you may depend—but never anything more!" She passed her soft hand over his hot brow; "God gives us strength to bear all, if we only know how to will ourselves."

At that moment her stepmother came in. "Kanute is wretched, because I am going away," she cried "Come, be a man!" and she laid her hand upon his shoulder: it seemed as though she had spoken of the

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journey, and of nothing else. "You are a child," she said; "be good and reasonable as you used to be under the willow tree, when we were little."

But to Kanute it seemed as if the whole world were moved out of its course; his thoughts were like loose threads, fluttering at the mercy of the wind. He stayed on, not knowing whether he had been asked to stay; but they were kind and friendly. Joanna poured out his tea, and sung to him—not the old song, but one so ineffably beautiful, sweet even to heart-breaking, and then they parted. Kanute did not hold out his hand, but she took it in hers, and said, "Will you not give your sister your hand at parting, dear old playfellow?" She smiled through the tears that fell down her cheeks, and whispered again the word "brother." That was a poor consolation! And so they parted.

Joanna sailed for France; Kanute plodded along the muddy streets of Copenhagen. His comrades in the workshop asked him why he was so dull and down-hearted, and told him to amuse himself while he was young. They went together to the dancing-rooms; many pretty girls were there, but none like Joanna: and here, where he thought of forgetting her, she rose brighter and more distinctly before his memory. "God gives us strength to bear all things if we only know how to will," she had said. A prayer rose in his heart,—the violins broke out, and the young girls danced gaily by; Kanute started, it seemed as if he had brought Joanna somewhere where she ought not to be, for she was surely with him in his heart. He went out of the room, and walked to the house where she used to live: it was all dark and silent—empty and lonely. The world went on its way, and left Kanute alone.

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Winter settled down; the water in the harbour was frozen, it was silent as a funeral.

But when spring came back and the first steamer left the port, Kanute shouldered his knapsack; a longing seized him to wander out into the world—anywhere except to France.

He wandered far into Germany, changing restlessly from town to town; it was not till he came to Nuremberg that he could make up his mind to stay.

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city; just as if it had been cut out of a picture book. The streets twist about as they will, the houses do not stand in stiff rows and squares; gable windows with little pinnacles, columns, and carved leaf work stand out above the footpaths. Down from the curious pointed roofs waterspouts, shaped like dragons or dogs with hanging tongues, reach to the very middle of the streets. Kanute stood alone in the market place: he was leaning against one of the old fountains covered with beautiful carvings of stories out of the Bible, or the history of the city. Between the grey sculptured stone two sparkling jets of water rise up in the sunlight; a pretty servant maid gave Kanute to drink; her hand was full of roses, and she offered him a flower. That was a good omen, he thought.

From the neighbouring church stole out the deep tones of an organ; it sounded so homelike that Kanute thought of the dear old church at Kjöge; he entered the great cathedral, the sunlight fell through the painted windows between the tall slender pillars; he knelt in prayer, and a quiet peace stole into his heart.

He found a good master in Nuremberg, and stayed with him. The old ramparts round the town are used for little kitchen gardens now, but the strong walls with the heavy turrets are standing yet. There the ropemaker

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has his ropewalk within the walls ; and there, out of every rift and cranny, grow the elder branches, overhanging the low-roofed houses far below. In one of these houses lived Kanute's master, and over the tiny attic where Kanute sat and worked, fell the shadow of the elder-tree.

Here he lived a summer and a winter ; he learned the German language well ; but when the spring came he could bear it no longer, the scent of the elder-blossom conjured up the old garden at Kjøge ; Kanute left his master, and wandered to another town where there was no elder-tree.

His workshop stood over an old stone bridge which crossed a rushing mill-stream ; far away hurried the foaming waters closed in on either side with old houses, whose crumbling gable windows seemed as if they must shake down into the stream. There was no elder here—not even a flower-pot with a slip of green—but just opposite the workshop was a large willow-tree that clung desperately to the house, so that it should not be torn away by the mill-stream, its branches drooped into the water as the branches of the old willow-tree at Kjøge drooped long ago.

Yes, certainly he had gone from the elder to the willow—and the tree, especially on moonlight nights, had something about it that went to his heart—it was not the moonlight, it was the tree itself.

And yet he could not bear it. Why not ? Ask the elder-blossom, ask the willow-tree. He bade farewell to his master and wandered farther.

He never spoke of Joanna ; he kept silence about his sorrow ; but he put a deep meaning into the story of the gingerbread cakes. He saw now why the man had a bitter almond for his heart—he felt the bitter taste of it himself—Joanna, who was always so sweet and

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friendly—she was all honey. He felt as if the strap of his knapsack pressed him so that he could scarcely breathe; he loosened it, but it was no better: it was only half the world he saw around him, the other half he bore within his heart—that was the way he felt.

Not till he saw the high snow mountains did the world seem lighter; his thoughts were turned outwards then, tears rose in his eyes.

The Alps seemed to him to be the world's great white wings, folded as if in prayer. What, if they unfolded, and spread wide their mighty pinions with their changeful pictures of pine woods, cataracts, blue-cloud, and dazzling snow? At the last day the earth would rise on her strong wings and soar aloft towards heaven to burst, like a soap-bubble, in the blaze of God's glory. "Oh, that the day were come!" he sighed.

Silently he wandered through the land that stretched before him like a grassy orchard; from the wooden balconies before the houses, maidens making lace nodded a kindly greeting, the mountain peaks glowed in the evening sunshine, and when he saw the green lakes gleam between the dark pine-trees, he thought of the broken coast of Kjöge, and his heart was stirred with sadness that was scarcely pain.

Yonder, where the Rhine flows away like one large wave, breaks into cloud, and is changed into snow-white vapoury mist as if there were the very workshop of the clouds—a rainbow flutters over it like an untied ribbon—there he thought of the old mill at Kjöge, where the water leaps and roars.

He would gladly have lingered in the quiet city by the Rhine, but there were far too many elder and willow trees, and he wandered on across the giant mountains, through wild ravines, and along paths that hung like

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swallows' nests against the mountain side. The torrents plunged into the depths below, the clouds sailed over him, he trod amid thistles and alpine roses, and snow in the warm summer sunshine. He bade farewell to the north, and wandered on under fragrant chestnut-trees, among blooming vine gardens and fields of maize ; the mountain stood like a wall between him and his memories, and that was well.

Before him lay the splendid city of Milan, and there he found a German master who took him into his service ; it was a pious, quiet household, and the old man and his wife learned to love the silent lad, who worked so hard, spoke so seldom, and led so good and innocent a life. Kanute felt as if God had lifted his burden from him.

His greatest pleasure was to climb from time to time up on to the mighty roof of the marble church ; he fancied it was created out of his native snows, piled up into fantastic pointed towers, and wondrous fretwork, and wide vaulted halls ; from every nook and corner the lovely slender columns shone out in their dazzling whiteness. Above him was the pure blue sky of Lombardy, below lay the city and the wide green plain stretching northwards to the solemn peaks crowned with eternal snow. At the sight his heart wandered on to Kjöger, with its red walls overhung with ivy ; he longed to be within them, he hoped to find his grave there, far beyond the mountains.

One year he stayed in Milan ; he had now been three years away from his home. His master, who was kind to the silent stranger, took him one night to the great opera-house of La Scala. Kanute gazed in wonder on the splendid scene ; tier above tier rose the stalls draped with silk and lace, and filled with the beautiful Italian

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ladies ablaze with diamonds, their white hands filled with rare flowers. The men were in evening dress: rich uniforms glittering with gold and silver braid were seen on every side. It was as light as in the brightest noonday, glorious music thrilled through the vast hall, it was far more beautiful than the theatre in Copenhagen; but Joanna was there—Ah! what magic was at work? The curtain rose, and there stood Joanna in robes of silk with ornaments and crown of gold! She sang like one of the angels in heaven, she smiled as only she herself could smile, she looked straight up into Kanute's face. The poor lad seized his master's hand, and cried aloud, "Joanna!" No one else heard it; the music drowned the cry; but the old man nodded and said, "Yes; that is her name—Joanna." He pushed a printed paper into Kanute's hand, where the name was printed—her whole name in large letters.

It was no dream. Flowers and wreaths fell in a fragrant rain at her feet; when she left the stage she was called back, and came again and again.

In the street, men had taken the horses from her carriage that they might draw it along: Kanute was among them, shouting wildly with the rest. As the carriage stopped before a brilliantly-lighted house, he stood close to the carriage door; it opened, and she stepped out, with the light falling full on her sweet face; she smiled and thanked them all with gentle graciousness. Kanute looked her in the face, she met his gaze calmly—she did not even know him. A man, on whose breast glittered a star, offered her his arm: he was her promised husband, so the people said.

Kanute went home and strapped up his knapsack. In one minute one can live through a whole life; the old resistless longing was strong upon him, drawing him back

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to the elder—to the willow tree—ah ! if he were only there !

The kindly old people urged him to stay : vainly they warned him of the winter, and told him that the moun-



tain paths were already white with snow. No words could hold him back ; surely, he thought, he could follow with his stout alpen stock in the track of the heavy carriage.

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He climbed the mountain and began the long descent—down—ever downwards. Wearily he looked for some hut, some friendly village, but there was none. The stars sparkled above him, his feet tripped and stumbled, his head swam; far below his feet the stars were sparkling, as if the sky had fallen. It was the lights of a little town shining through grey mist. Wearied out, he reached a poverty-stricken inn, where he stayed the night.

A night and a day he lingered there to gain strength; the thaw had set in, and it was raining in the valley; but early the next morning a wandering harper came by and played one of the old Danish tunes, which Kanute had heard a thousand times in Kjøge. He had no strength to stand against it, and once more hastened northwards, hurrying as if he must reach his home before all he loved were dead. He spoke to no one of his feverish longing; hiding it, as he had always hidden his heart's sorrow. A settled grief is out of place in this world—even friends do not find it entertaining. A stranger, he wandered northwards through strange lands.

Evening drew on. He was walking along the open road. The frost was keen and bitter; the country flat, with fields and meadow lands; on the roadside stood a willow tree—it was quite home-like. Kanute seated himself under the tree: he was very weary: his head was heavy, his eyes stiff with drowsiness. He felt how the tree stretched its arms over him; to his tired fancy it seemed a tall man; the "Willow-father" himself come to lift his tired son in his strong arms and carry him back to Kjøge to the old garden. It was the very same old willow, who had wandered out into the world to find him; now he had found him and carried him back to the brook side; and there stood Joanna in her splendid dress

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and golden crown, just as he had seen her last : and she called aloud to him, " Welcome home ! "

Before him stood two quaint figures that looked much more life-like than they used to do in his childhood ; they were altered, but he knew them again ; it was the two gingerbread cakes, they were turned right side forward, and looked very nice. " A thousand thanks ! " they said to Kanute. " You have loosened our tongues, so that we



have spoken out our thoughts, and some thing is come of it at last. We are engaged ! "

They walked prettily hand in hand along the streets of Kjöge ; they did not look amiss, even on the wrong side ; there was really no fault to find with them. They walked straight to the church, and Kanute and Joanna followed. They also walked hand in hand : the church stood open ;

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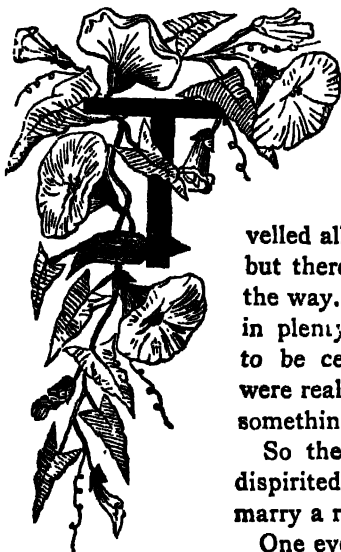
the ivy hung as ever over its red walls ; the organ pealed out, and they stepped up the broad path to the porch. " Let the master and mistress go first," said the gingerbread people, making room for Kanute and Joanna. They knelt before the altar, Joanna bent over him, and tears, icy cold, fell from her eyes upon his burning cheeks. It was the ice round her heart, melted at last by his true love, and—he woke. He was sitting under the leafless willow tree, in a foreign land, upon a winter's night ; from the heavy clouds, sharp hailstones fell and lashed his face.

" That was the happiest hour of my life," he said, " and—it was a dream. Ah ! let me dream again ! "

He closed his eyes once more ;—he slept, and dreamed. Towards morning the snow fell silently. It flew before the wind, and drifted over him : he slept. The villagers on their way to church saw a wandering 'prentice lad lying on the road side. He was dead—frozen under the willow tree !



The Princess and the Pea.



HERE was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she must be a real princess. He travelled all over the world to find one, but there was always something in the way. Princesses were to be had in plenty; but it was another thing to be certain whether or no they were real ones. There was always something not quite as it should be.

So the prince came home quite dispirited, for he dearly longed to marry a real princess.

One evening a fearful storm broke over the town; it thundered and lightened, and the rain came down in streams; it was terrible to see. In the very fiercest of the storm, a knock was heard at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

Outside the gate stood a princess. But oh! what a sight she was from the rain and storm! The water was streaming down from her hair and clothes; it ran in at the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. And yet she said she was a real princess.

"Oh yes!" thought the old queen, "we shall very

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soon find that out." But she said nothing ; she went up into the bed-room and pulled off all the beds ; then she put a pea on the bedstead ; over that she laid twenty mattresses, and over the twenty mattresses twenty eider-down beds.

That was the bed in which the princess was to pass the night. In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"Very badly indeed," said the princess ; "I have not closed an eye all night. Goodness knows whatever was in the bed ! I have been lying on something dreadfully hard, for I am black and blue all over. It is really frightful."

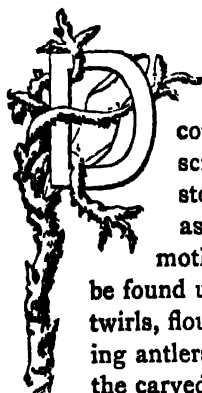
Now then they all saw that she was a real princess, because she had found out the pea through all the twenty mattresses, and twenty eider-down beds. No one but a real princess could possibly be so sensitive.

So the prince married her, for he knew that he had in her a real princess for a wife ; and the pea was placed in the royal museum, where it is still to be seen, unless any one has stolen it.

Now this is a true story.



The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweeper.



DID you ever see a very old wooden cupboard, coal-black with age, and covered from top to bottom with carved scrolls and foliage? Just such a one stood once in a parlour; it had been left as a legacy by some great-great-grand-mother. Carved roses and tulips were to be found upon it in plenty, lying among curious twirls, flourishes, and stags' heads with branching antlers. In the centre of the cupboard was the carved figure of a man; it was really laughable to look at, for it grinned from ear to ear; it had goat's legs, little horns on its head, and a long beard. The children in the room called it "Billy-goat's-legs Head-and-tail-general-sergeant-commander-in-chief!" That was a hard name to pronounce, and there are not many people who receive such a title, much less have it carved in wood. Well, there he was; and he was always looking at the little table under the mirror, where there stood a lovely little shepherdess, made of porcelain. Her shoes and hat were gilt; in her dress she wore a crimson rose, and her shepherd's staff was in her hand; she was very lovely. Close beside her stood a little chimney-sweeper, as black as a coal. He, too, was made of porcelain, and was as dainty and elegant as could be;

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as to his being a chimney-sweeper, that was only his make-believe. The china worker could just as well have made him into a prince if he had chosen.

He stood there with his little ladder; his face was as pink and white as a girl's, and that was, properly speaking, a mistake, for it ought to have been rather blacked. He stood very close to the shepherdess; they had both been placed just where they were, and since they *were* placed there, they had fallen in love. They suited each other exactly; both were young people, both made of the same porcelain, and both equally brittle.

Near to them stood a figure, three times their size. It was an old Chinaman, who could nod his head. He was made of porcelain too, and he said that he was the little shepherdess's grandfather, but I doubt whether he could prove it. He declared that he had authority over her, and therefore he had nodded his head when "Billy-goat's-legs Head - and - tail-general - sergeant - commander - in-chief" asked him for her hand.

"That is the husband for you," said the old Chinaman; "a man who is, I believe, real mahogany. He can make you Lady Billy-goat's-legs Head - and - tail-general-sergeant-commander-in-chief. He has the whole cupboard full of silver plate that he keeps locked up in secret drawers."

"I won't go into the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess; "I have been told that he has eleven porcelain wives in there already."

"Then you shall be the twelfth," said the Chinaman. "This very night, as soon as ever the old cupboard creaks, you shall be married, as true as I'm a Chinaman." And he nodded his head, and went to sleep.

The little shepherdess cried, and looked at her true love, the little chimney-sweeper. "I must ask you,"

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she said, "to go with me out into the wide world, for we cannot possibly remain here."

"I will do all you wish," said the chimney-sweeper. "Let us go at once; I think I shall be able to support you with my—profession."

"If we were but safely off the table!" she said. "I shall know no peace till I am out in the wide world."

Her lover soothed her, and showed her how to place her little foot in the carved edges and gilt leaf work of the table leg. He set up his ladder to help her, and very soon they were safely on the floor. But when they looked across at the old cupboard, they saw that it was all astir, the stags' heads were arching their necks, and pricking up their antlers, the wooden Commander-in-chief was jumping up and down, and calling out to the old Chinaman, "They are running away; they are running away!"

That frightened them dreadfully, and they jumped into an open drawer under the window sill.

In the drawer were three packs of cards, but none of them quite perfect. There was also a dolls' theatre, which had been set up as well as circumstances allowed; a play was going on at that moment.

All the queens, diamonds, hearts, clubs, and spades were sitting in the front row, fanning themselves with their tulips; the knaves stood behind them, showing clearly that they had heads above and below, as is often the case with playing cards. The play was all about two lovers who were parted for ever, and the shepherdess wept, for was not that her own story? "I cannot bear it," she said. "Take me out of this drawer." But when they reached the floor, the old Chinaman woke up and shook all over his body, which was made in one piece.

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"Now the old Chinaman is coming," said the little shepherdess, sinking on one knee in terror.

"I have an idea," said the chimney-sweeper. "Let us get into the large pot-pourri jar in the corner yonder. There we can rest on rose leaves and lavender, and if he comes after us, we can throw salt in his eyes."

"That will never do," she answered. "Many years ago the old Chinaman was engaged to that jar, and there is always a certain tenderness left between people who have stood in that relationship to each other. No, nothing is left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage to go with me out into the wide world?" said the chimney-sweeper. "Have you thought how large it is, and that we can never come back again?"

"I have!" she said.

The chimney-sweeper looked at her earnestly, and said, "My path lies through the chimney! Have you really courage to go with me into the stove, through the fire-box, and up the pipes? That will lead us into the chimney, and then I shall know how to manage. We shall climb so high that no one can overtake us, and at the very top there is a hole that leads out into the wide world."

He led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks dark," she said, but she followed him through the fire-box, and up the pipe, where all was black as night.

"Now we are in the chimney," he said. "Look up yonder, a glorious star is shining." And it really was a star in the sky that was shining down on them, as if to show them the way. They climbed and crept; it seemed a fearful path, high, steep, and endless; but he lifted her, and held her, and showed her where to set her little

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foot, until they reached the very top of the chimney, where they sat down quite tired out, as well they might be.

The sky with all its stars was high above them; the town with its twinkling lights lay far below.

They could see all round them—far, far out into the wide world. The poor little shepherdess had *never* fancied it like that; she leant her weary head on the shoulder of her faithful chimney-sweeper and cried till the gold was washed off her sash.

"This is too much!" she cried. "I cannot bear it. The world is far too large. Oh, were I only back on the table under the mirror! I shall know no peace till I am there again. I *have* followed you out into the wide world—now take me back again, if you really love me."

The chimney-sweeper tried to reason with her; he reminded her of the old Chinaman, and the terrible Commander-in-chief; but she only sobbed and kissed her little chimney-sweeper, so that he could do nothing else but yield to her, though it was rather foolish.

So they climbed with endless trouble back again down the chimney, down the pipe, through the fire-box, into the stove—it was anything but pleasant. They lingered for a moment in the oven and listened behind the door, just to find out what was going on in the room. All was silent—they looked in—mercy on us! there lay the old Chinaman in the middle of the floor broken into three pieces! He had jumped off the table after them, his back had come off in one piece, and his head had rolled into a corner. The Commander-in-chief was standing where he had always stood, pondering deeply.

"Oh, this is terrible!" cried the little shepherdess. "My old grandfather is broken in pieces, and it is all

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our doing! I shall never survive it!" And she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted," said the chimney-sweeper; "dear me! he can be riveted. Don't excite yourself so dreadfully. If they cement his back, and put a good rivet in his neck, he will be as good as new, and able to give us many a sharp word yet."

"Do you think so?" she said. And then they crept up on to the table where they had stood before.

"Much the forwarder we are!" said the chimney-sweeper. "We might have spared ourselves some trouble."

"If my dear grandfather were but riveted!" said the little shepherdess. "I wonder if it costs much."

And riveted he was. The family had his back cemented, and a good rivet put in his neck, and he was as good as new, only he could not nod his head.

"We have grown consequential since we were broken to pieces!" said the Commander-in-chief. "I really don't see why you should give yourself such airs. Am I to have her, or am I not?"

The chimney-sweeper and the shepherdess looked imploringly at the old Chinaman; they were terribly afraid lest he should nod. But that was just what he could not do; and it would have been extremely mortifying for him to have to keep telling every one that he had a rivet in his back.

So the little porcelain folk were left together, and they oessed their grandfather's rivet, and loved each other dearly till they broke.

The Tinder-Box.



SOLDIER went marching by along the road. "Left, right, left, right!" He had his knapsack on his back, and a sabre at his side, for he was coming home from the war.

On the high road he met an old witch; she was very repulsive to look at: her under lip hung down over her chin. "Good evening, soldier," she said. "What a fine sabre you have got! and what a large knapsack! You are something like a soldier, and you shall have as much money as ever you like."

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"Do you see that tall tree yonder?" said the witch. "It is hollow inside. Climb up to the top and you will see a hole through which you can let yourself down right into the tree. I will tie a rope round you so that I can pull you up again when you call to me."

"What am I to do when I am down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Fetch up money," said the witch. "Below the roots of the tree you will find a large hall, lighted up with more than three hundred lamps. Then you will see three doors; open them all, the key is in each lock. In the first room you will see a large chest in the middle of the floor, and on the chest a dog with eyes as big as saucers. Don't mind him in the least. Here is my

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blue-checked apron ; spread that out on the floor and put the dog upon it, then open the chest and take out as much copper as you like. If you prefer silver you must go on into the next room. But *there is* a dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels—you need not fear him, however. Put him on my apron and take out the money. If you want gold, you can have it, as much as ever you can carry, by going into the third room ; but the dog on the chest of gold has eyes as big as steeples—he is a savage brute, you may take my word for it. Never fear him, however ; put him on my apron, he won't hurt you, and you can take as much gold as you will."

"That doesn't sound amiss," said the soldier. "But what am I to give you for it, old witch? for I don't suppose you mean to do it for nothing."

"I do," said the witch. "I won't take a penny. All I ask is that you shall bring me up an old tinder-box that my grandmother left behind her the last time she was there."

"Well, then," said the soldier, "tie the rope round my waist."

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue-checked apron."

The soldier climbed up the tree, let himself down, and stood, as the witch had said, in a great hall where hundreds of lamps were burning. He opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as saucers, glaring at him. "You're a nice fellow!" said the soldier, lifting him on to the witch's apron.

Then he filled his pockets with copper, shut the chest, and went into the next room. Right enough, there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You had better not stare so," said the soldier ; "your eyes might come out of your head altogether." He lifted

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the dog on to the witch's apron, and at the sight of all the silver in the chest, he emptied his pockets again, and filled them and his knapsack too with silver. Then he went into the third room. That really was awful! The dog had eyes every inch as big as steeples, and they both spun round like wheels.

"I hope you are well," said the soldier, saluting, for he had never seen a dog like that before. But when he had looked at him long enough he thought, "Well, I must be quick," lifted him on to the apron and opened the chest. Heavens! what a heap of gold! enough to buy up all the town: with all the barley sugar, tin soldiers, whips and rocking-horses in the whole world. The soldier soon threw away all the silver, and filled his pockets, knapsack, cap, and even his boots with gold. He could hardly walk, but he had the money. He put back the dog on the chest, shut the door and called up the tree. "Now pull me up, old witch."

"Have you got the tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"Heart alive!" said the soldier, "I quite forgot that."

He went back and fetched it; the witch pulled him up, and there he stood on the high road, with his pockets, knapsack, cap, and boots brimful of gold.

"What do you want with the tinder-box?" asked the soldier.

"That's no business of yours," said the witch; "you have your money; give me the box."

"What's that you say?" cried the soldier. "Tell me this very minute what you want it for, or I'll draw my sword and cut off your head."

"I won't!" said the witch.

The soldier immediately cut off her head. There she lay. He tied up all his money in her apron; slung it like

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a bundle over his shoulder, put the tinder-box in his pocket, and walked on towards the town.

It was a splendid town. The soldier went into one of the best hotels, engaged the largest room, and ordered everything he liked best for supper. He was rich now, because he had so much money.

The man who blacked his boots thought it was strange that such a rich gentleman should wear such very old boots, but the next day the soldier bought new ones, and a new suit of clothes. He was not a soldier now, but a fine gentleman; and the people spoke to him of all the remarkable things in the town, of the king, and the beautiful young princess, his daughter.

"Where can one see her?" asked the soldier.

"You cannot see her," was the reply; "she lives in a large brazen castle, surrounded by walls and turrets. No one but the king may enter, because it was once prophesied that she would marry a common soldier."

"I should like to look at her," said the soldier; but it was quite impossible for him to obtain permission.

From this time he lived a merry life, going to theatres, and driving about in the royal parks and gardens. He gave away a great deal to the poor, and that was right of him: he knew of old what it is not to have a shilling in one's pocket. Now he was rich, wore fine clothes, and had numbers of friends, who all said he was an excellent fellow, and a perfect gentleman. The soldier was pleased at that. But unluckily, as he went on spending money every day, and never earning any more, he found himself at last with scarcely any left, and was obliged to leave his beautiful rooms for a little garret under the roof, where he had to black his own boots, and mend them with a packing-needle. None of his friends

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came to see him now—there were too many steps to climb.

It was a dark night, and he could not even buy himself a candle; but it suddenly occurred to him that there was a piece of candle left in the tinder-box which he had fetched up for the old witch, out of the hollow tree. He struck a light, and the moment it flashed up, the door opened, and in came the dog with eyes as big as saucers. "What does my lord require?" said the dog.

"What is this?" said the soldier. "This is a lively sort of a tinder-box if I can get whatever I like out of it! Get me some money," he said to the dog, and *whish!* off he was—*whish!* there he was back again with a bag full of copper in his mouth.

Then the soldier began to see what a famous box it was. You struck it once, and up came the dog with eyes as big as saucers; you struck it twice, and up came the one that sat on the chest of silver; three times, and up came the one that kept guard over the gold. The soldier went downstairs again into his beautiful rooms, and bought some more fine clothes. Then all his friends knew him again directly, and thought a great deal of him.

One day he began to think what a singular thing it was that nobody could get to see the princess. Every one said she was very beautiful, but what was the good of that if she had to live in a brazen castle surrounded by high walls? "Can't I manage to see her?" he thought. "Where is my tinder-box?" He struck a light, and up came the dog with eyes as big as saucers. "I know it is the middle of the night," said the soldier; "but I should like to look at the princess for a minute or so."

The dog was out of the house in a second, and before

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the soldier could draw breath, *whish!* there he was again, with the princess on his back. She lay there fast asleep; so beautiful that every one could see she was a princess. The soldier could not help kissing her once, soldier-like.

Then the dog ran back with the princess. But the next morning when the king and queen were at breakfast, the princess said that she had had a very strange dream in the night; she had ridden along on a dog's back, and been kissed by a soldier.

"That's a pretty story!" said the queen.

The next night one of the old ladies-in-waiting was ordered to watch by the princess's bed, and see whether it was really a dream, or what was the meaning of it.

The soldier felt a great longing to see the princess again, so the dog was sent to fetch her, and ran for her as quickly as before. But the maid of honour was awake; she put on goloshes and ran behind them, and when she saw the dog disappear in a large house, she put a cross on the door with a piece of chalk. Then she went home and got into bed, and the dog came back with the princess. But when he saw a cross on the house where the soldier lived, *he* took a piece of chalk and put a cross on every house in the town. That was rather clever on his part, because now the maid of honour could not possibly tell which was the door.

Early the next morning, down came the king and queen, with the maid of honour and all the army, to see where the princess had been.

"There it is!" cried the king, as soon as he saw the first cross on a door.

"No, there it is, my dear husband," said the queen, looking at the second cross.

"But *there's* one and *there's* one!" cried everybody

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at once; for wherever they looked nothing was to be seen but crosses. Then they began to understand that it was of no use looking any farther.

Now the queen was a very clever woman, who could do more than ride in a carriage. She took out her golden scissors, cut up a piece of silk, and made it into a pretty little bag. She then filled it with flour, and tied it round the princess's waist, so that the flour might be strewn all along the way she went.

That night the dog came again, and carried off the princess; the soldier had now fallen deeply in love with her, and would gladly have married her.

The dog never noticed the flour as it fell all along the road from the castle to the soldier's room. The next morning the king and queen saw clearly where their daughter had been, and the soldier was immediately arrested, and put in prison.

There he had to stop. It was dull and gloomy enough, and all they said to him was, "You will be hanged to-morrow!" *That* was not exactly cheering, and his tinder-box was left behind in his lodgings. The next morning, as he looked through the iron bars of his window, he saw the crowds of people hurrying into the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beating, and saw the soldiers marching by. Everybody was out, even a shoemaker's lad, in his apron and slippers, who was running so fast that one of his slippers fell off, and flew right up against the window where the soldier stood.

"Hallo! my lad," cried the soldier; "you need not be in such a tremendous hurry; they won't begin without me. If you would like to earn some money, just run to my lodgings, and fetch me my tinder-box; you shall have a shilling for your trouble, but you must be quick about it."

The lad thought he should like to earn the shilling,

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so he fetched the tinder-box, gave it to the soldier, and —well, now we shall hear.

The gallows was set up outside the town, and round it stood the soldiers and thousands of people. The king and queen sat on a splendid throne, opposite the judges and council. The soldier mounted the ladder, the rope was placed round his neck, when he said that the last harmless wish of a poor wretch was always granted, and he begged permission to smoke a pipe of tobacco—it would be his last pipe in this world.

The king granted his request, and the soldier struck his box—once, twice, thrice! In a moment, up sprang the three dogs—the one with eyes as big as saucers,—the one with eyes as big as mill-wheels,—and the one with eyes as big as steeples.

“Help me, so that I shall not be hanged,” said the soldier. And the dogs flew at the judges and at all the council, seizing one by the leg and one by the nose, and tossing them up in the air to such a height that they fell down, and broke all to bits.

“I won't be tossed!” said the king, but up he went, and the queen after him. That frightened the soldiers and the people to such a degree, that they cried out “Noble soldier! you shall be our king, and marry the princess.”

Then they handed the soldier into the king's carriage, and the three dogs ran by the side and cried, “Hurrah!” The street boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The princess was set free from the brazen castle, and became queen, which pleased her exceedingly. The wedding festivities lasted eight days, and the dogs sat up to table and stared with all their might.



Elder-Tree Mother.



HERE was once a little boy who had caught cold ; he had been out and got his feet wet ; how he managed it no one could think, for it was fine, dry weather. His mother undressed him, put him to bed, and brought in the teapot to make some elder-tea, for that is the best possible thing for a cold. At the same moment, in came the kind old man, who lived all by himself in the top story ; he had neither wife nor child of his own, but he was very fond of children, and used to tell them numbers of beautiful stories and fairy tales.

"Drink your tea, and then perhaps you will hear a story," said the mother.

"Only I don't know any new ones," said the old man, nodding good-humouredly ; "but how did the child get his feet wet ?"

"Ah ! that is just what no one can understand," said the mother.

"Shall I hear a tale ?" said the little boy.

"Yes, if you can tell me—for I must know that first—the exact depth of the gutter that runs down the street before your school-house ?"

"It comes just half way up to my knee, if I stand in the very deepest part," said the child.

"Ah ! that's where we get our wet feet from," said the old man. "Now, then, I owe you a tale, but I really do not know one."

"You can make one up," said the little boy. "Mother

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says that everything you look at turns into a fairy tale, and that you can make a story out of everything you touch."

"Yes, but that kind of story is not worth much. The best ones come of themselves; they tap at my forehead, and say 'Here we are.'"

"Won't they soon tap?" said the little boy. His mother laughed, put the elder-tea in the pot, and poured boiling water over it. "Tell me one—tell me one."

"I would if one would come of itself, but they give themselves such airs; they only come just when they like. Wait!" he cried, suddenly. "Here is one—look, there is one in the teapot."

The child looked at the teapot; the lid raised itself higher and higher, and out of it rose the elder blossoms as white as snow; long branches spread abroad from the lid and spout as well; farther and farther they stretched, pushing aside the bed curtains, and filling the whole room with a glory of green leaves and fragrant blossom. In the midst of the tree sat an old woman, —her dress was green as the leaves of the elder-tree, and covered with white flowers; it was hard to tell whether it was woven stuff or living leaves and flowers.

"What is her name?" said the little boy.

"Why the Romans and Greeks used to call her a Dryad," said the old man; "but we do not understand that, and the sailors have found a much better name for her. They call her elder-tree mother, and it is to her that you must listen now."

"In the corner of a small, poverty-stricken court stands just such a tall, beautiful elder-tree as this one, and under its branches one sunny afternoon sat two old people. It was an old sailor and his wife; they were great-grandparents, and were going to keep their golden

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wedding, only they were not quite clear as to the exact date. The elder-tree mother sat above them in the tree, and looked as pleased as she does now. 'I know when the golden wedding is,' she said; but they did not hear her, for they were talking of old times.

"'Do you remember,' said the old sailor, 'when we were quite little and used to run and play together in this very yard where we are sitting now? We planted some slips and made a garden.'

"'I remember,' said the old woman, 'one of the slips was an elder, and it took root, and shot up into this fine old tree that waves over us now.'

"'Surely,' he said; 'and yonder in the corner was a water-butt, where I sailed my boat that I had made myself. How it sailed! To be sure I have seen a different kind of sailing since then.'

"'Yes; but first we went to school and got our learning,' she said, 'and then we were confirmed. Both of us cried; but in the afternoon we walked hand in hand round the ramparts, and looked over the country round Copenhagen and across the sea; and then we went to Friedrichsburg, where the king and queen sail about in their beautiful boat.'

"'But I was obliged to go and sail about in very different quarters, and stay away for years at a time.'

"'Yes; I often used to cry over it. I thought you were dead, and rocked to sleep by the waves. Many a night I got up to see if the weathercock had turned round; and it often turned, but you did not come. I remember so well how the rain came down one day; I was going to fetch the sweepings to put in the dust-cart; the man had just come round with his cart to the house where I was servant; I stood near the dustbin, and looking at the rain, when up came the postman

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and gave me a letter from you. My word! how it had wandered about! I tore it open and read it, crying and laughing in a breath, I was so glad. It said you were in the warm countries where the coffee grows. "What a lovely place it must be! You had so much to tell, and I was reading it all, while the rain poured down, and the man stood there with his cart. Then some one came and seized me round the waist, and——"

"And you gave him a sounding box on the ear, till it tingled again."

"I did not know it was you. You had come as quickly as your letter. And how handsome you were! indeed so you are now. You wore a shiny hat, and had a large yellow silk handkerchief in your pocket. How well you looked, and what a storm it was, and what a plight the street was in!"

"Then we got married, do you remember?" he said, 'and then our first little lad was born, and after him came Marie, and Niels, and Peter, and Hans, and Christian.'

"All grown up now, and all good children, such as no one can say a word against."

"And now their children have little ones of their own. It is a hardy race. If I remember right, it was about this time of year that we married."

"Yes; to-day is the golden wedding," said the elder-tree mother, bending down her head to the old people. They thought it was a neighbour speaking to them, and they looked each into the other's face and clasped hands. The children and grandchildren soon came round them; they knew well enough that it was the golden wedding-day, and they had congratulated the old people that very morning; but the dear old folk had forgotten it already, though they could remember so

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well all that had happened long years ago. The elder-tree poured forth its fragrance, and the setting sun shone straight into the two old faces, lending them its glow and brightness; while the youngest grandchild danced round them, shouting with delight, and saying that they were all going to have a feast to-night—a feast, and roasted potatoes! The elder-tree mother nodded from the branches and cried ‘Hurrah!’ with the rest.”

“But that was not a fairy tale,” said the little boy, who had been listening all the while.

“You must understand it first,” said the old man; “let us ask the elder-tree mother about it.”

“That was not a fairy tale,” said the elder-tree mother, “but this is going to be one. The strangest fairy tales grow out of realities, or else my beautiful tree could not grow out of the teapot. You must allow that.” She lifted the little boy out of bed, and laid him in her lap: the branches closed over them with all their flowers; it was as if they were sitting in a leafy arbour, which flew away with them through the air. It was beautiful to see. The elder-tree mother had changed into a lovely little girl, but the dress was the same, and in her bodice she wore a spray of real elder flowers. Her great blue eyes were glorious to look upon, and a wreath of elder blossom crowned her soft yellow curls. She and the little boy kissed each other, for they were of the same age, and both were as happy as they could be.

Hand in hand they walked out of the arbour into a beautiful flower garden; near the velvet lawn the father’s walking stick was tied up; the children mounted the stick, and it became alive to them; the silver knob changed to the head of a fiery, neighing steed, a long black mane tossed in the wind; four strong, slender legs

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appeared ; the horse was wild and spirited, and galloped with them round the grass-plot. " Hurrah ! " cried the lad ; " we are riding miles away ; we are riding to the old castle, where we went last year." Round the lawn they rode, and the little girl, who, as we know, was no other than the elder-tree mother herself, cried, " Now we are in the country ; do you see the old farmhouse with the oven built out of the wall, like a gigantic egg ? The elder-tree waves over it ; the cock goes and scratches for the hens ; see, how he struts about ! Now we are at the church on the steep hill where the two oak trees grow ; look, one of them is quite withered. Now we are at the forge. The fire flames up, the half naked men swing the hammers till the sparks fly far and wide. Away to the splendid castle." And everything the little girl spoke of, as she sat behind him on the stick, flew past them as they went ; the boy saw it all, and yet they only went round the lawn. Then they played about in the garden paths, and made a little garden bed ; the girl took the elder flowers from her hair, and planted them ; and they grew up into a large tree, like the one the two old people planted when they were little, as the old man had told the little boy. They walked hand in hand, just as the two old people had done ; only instead of going to the ramparts, or the Friedrichsburg gardens, the little girl clasped the boy round the waist, and they flew all over the country. It was spring, and then summer, then autumn, and then winter. Thousands of pictures passed before the boy's eyes, and rested in his heart ; and the little girl said, " You will never forget that." And through all their flight, the scent of the elder-tree rose up strong and fragrant ; the child could certainly smell the roses and the fresh beech-trees too, but the elder-tree was the sweetest of all, for its flowers

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lay on the little girl's heart, and there it was that the boy rested his head.

"It is lovely here in spring," said the little girl, as they stood among the fresh green of the beech-woods; the wild thyme blossomed at their feet, and the pale pink anemones looked their loveliest among the tender leaves. "Oh, if it were always spring-time in the beautiful beech-woods!"

"It is splendid here in summer!" she said; and they flew by ancient castles, where the high walls and pointed gables were mirrored in the moat below, on which the swans sailed and looked up the cool, green avenues. In the fields the corn waved like a sea; red and yellow flowers grew in the trenches, wild hops and flowering bindweed filled the hedges; in the evening the moon rose large and round; the haystacks in the meadows breathed out all their fragrance. Such scenes cannot be forgotten.

"It was beautiful here in autumn," said the little girl. "The air was twice as high and blue; the forest put on all its richest colours—scarlet, gold, and green. The hounds dashed by in the chase; flocks of wild birds flew screaming over the Huns' graves, where the flowering brambles twined round the ancient stones. The sea was deep blue, covered with white sailed ships; old women sat in the barns; girls and children gathered hops into the large vats; the lads sang merry songs, but the old people told tales of gnomes and sorcerers. It could never be better anywhere.

"It is lovely here in winter," said the little girl. "The trees were covered with rime frost so that they looked like silver coral. The snow cracked under foot as if one always had new boots on; one after another the stars shot through the sky. The Christmas tree was lighted

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in the room, songs and merriment resounded ; in the peasant's cottage one heard the violin, they were playing games with apples ; even the poorest child said, ' It is beautiful here in winter.' "

Yes, it was beautiful. And the little girl told the boy everything ; the elder-tree blossomed, merrily waved the red flag with the white cross, the flag under which the old seaman sailed. The boy grew to manhood ; he went out into the wide world, into warm countries where the coffee grows. But at parting, the little girl took an elder-flower from her breast and gave it to him to keep for her sake. He put it in his prayer-book, and in foreign lands, whenever he opened the book, it opened at the place where the flower was laid, and the more he looked at it the fresher it grew, so that he breathed again the fragrance of his native woods, he saw again the little maiden looking out from out the leaves with her clear blue eyes, and she whispered, " Here it is beautiful in spring, and summer, in autumn, and in winter," and hundreds of pictures passed through his mind.

Years passed away, and now he was an old man, and sat with his old wife under the blossoming elder-tree : their hands were clasped together as the hands of the old people had been, and the children spoke as they had done of old days and the golden wedding. The little girl sat in the tree overhead and nodded to the pair, saying, " To-day is the golden wedding-day ! " Then she plucked off two flowers from her wreath, and kissed them ; they shone first like silver, and then like gold, and when she let them fall on the heads of the old people, each flower became a golden crown.

There they sat like a king and queen under the fragrant elder-tree, and he told his wife the story of the elder-tree mother as it had been told to him when he

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was a little boy. Both of them thought that there was a good deal in the story that was like their own; and that was the part they liked the best.

"Yes; so it is," said the little maiden in the tree. "Some call me Elder-tree mother, and some Dryad, but my real name is Memory. I dwell in the tree that grows and grows for ever; I can look back, I can tell tales. Let me see if you have your flower still."

The old man opened his prayer-book, and there lay the flower as fresh as if it had been just laid in. Memory nodded, and the two old people with the golden crowns sat in the red glow of the sunset: they closed their eyes, and—and—that was all the story.

The little boy was lying in bed; he did not know whether he had been dreaming, or whether any one had told him the story. The teapot stood still on the table, but there was no elder-tree growing out of it; and the old man who had told the story was just going out at the door.

"How beautiful it was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been in warm countries."

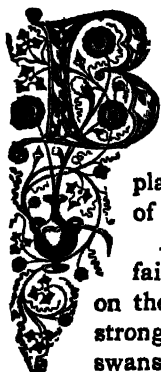
"I daresay you have," said his elder-tree mother, "when one drinks two cups of warm elder-tea one may well go to warm countries." And she covered him up warmly lest he should take cold. "You have had a nice sleep," she said, "while we were disputing as to whether it was a fairy tale or not."

"Where is the elder-tree mother?" asked the boy.

"In the teapot," said his mother; "and there she may stay."



The Swan's Nest.



BETWEEN the Baltic and the North Sea lies an old swan's nest ; there have been, and shall be, born swans who never die.

Long ago a flock of swans flew across the Alps, and lighted on the green Italian plains, where life was beautiful. That flight of swans was called Lombards.

Another flight, with bright plumage and faithful eyes, flew to Byzantium, settled down on the imperial throne, and spread out their strong wings to shelter him. They called these swans the Varangian guard.

Along the coast of France arose a cry of anguish and terror at sight of the wild flight of swans, who swooped down from the north, with firebrands for wings, and wildly rose the Litany, "From the fury of the Normans, good Lord deliver us."

On the green English coast stood the Danish swan, wearing the triple crown ; his golden sceptre stretched far and wide over the land.

On Pomeranian soil the heathen bowed the knee, as the Danish swan sailed up under the banner of the cross, with drawn swords flashing.

"That was long ago," you say.

But in later days, mighty swans have risen from the nest. A light shone out high in air, over the countries

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of the world ; with the strokes of his mighty pinions, a swan clove asunder the dim vapours of the twilight ; the starry heaven flashed into sight as if it were drawn nearer to the earth. That swan was Tycho Brahe.

“Yes—*then*,” you say. “But in our own days——”

We saw swan after swan rise in glorious flight ; one let his wings sweep the strings of a golden harp ; a burst of music echoed through the north, and the Norwegian cliffs resounded to the songs of old, heroic days ; the



pinés and birches swayed to the melody ; gods, heroes, and noble women rose before the dark background of the forests.

A swan smote with his wings the block of marble till it burst asunder, and set free the forms of beauty held prisoned in the stone ; forth they wandered into the clear

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sunshine, and in all lands men rose to gaze upon, and welcome them.

A third swan spun the magic wire that girdles the earth itself, drawing country near to country, and lending to human speech the speed of lightning.

God loves the old swan's nest between the Baltic and North Sea. And if mighty birds of prey drew near to work it harm, the very fledglings would close in a circle round the beloved nest, offering their hearts' best blood, fighting with beak and claw !

Centuries will pass away, and many a noble swan will leave the nest to wing its glorious flight round the world, before the day comes when one can truly say, "That is the last swan—the last song from the old swan's nest."

Holger Danske.



KRONENBURG Castle stands in Denmark, close to the Oere Sound, through which tall ships sail by in hundreds, English, Russian, and Prussian. They all greet the old fortress with their cannon, "Boom !" And the Castle answers, "Boom !" That is the way the cannon say "Good morning" and "Good evening." In the winter, when no ships sail by, and the Sound is covered with ice right up to the Swedish coast, it looks just like an inland street. Danish and Swedish flags are flying ; Danes and Swedes cry to each other, "Good morning" and "Good night," but not with

HOLGER DANSKE.

cannon—no, with a kindly clasp of the hand. One brings to the other biscuits and white bread, for foreign fare is always the sweetest. But the most beautiful sight of all is the grand, old castle, in whose deep inaccessible vaults sits Holger Danske. He is clad in mail armour; his head rests on his strong arms; his long beard has grown into the marble table, where he sits asleep. He dreams, and in his dream he sees all that happens in his native land. Every Christmas Eve an angel comes to him, and tells him that his dreams are true, but that he may sleep on undisturbed for a while longer. Denmark is not yet in danger, but if the danger ever comes, Holger Danske will spring to his feet, the table will shiver to pieces as he draws away his beard, and the hero will lay about him, so that every land shall ring with the story,

An old grandfather sat one evening telling his little grandson all this tale of Holger Danske, and the child knew well that what his grandfather said was true. As the old man spoke, he finished off a large wooden figure of Holger Danske which was to ornament the prow of a ship, for the grandfather was a carver in wood, and had carved many a figure-head from which a good ship was to take her name. Now he had just carved Holger Danske, standing proudly with his long beard; in one hand he held his flashing sword; in the other the Danish shield.

The old man spoke of so many noble Danish men and women that at last the child thought he must know as much as Holger Danske himself, especially as *he* only dreamed it all; and when the child went to bed, he thought so much about it that he pressed his little chin against the coverlet, and thought that he too had a beard, which was grown fast to the place.

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But the old grandfather stopped to finish his carving, and put the last touches to the Danish shield. When he had finished, he looked earnestly at his work, and thought over all that he had heard and read, and what he had been telling the child that very evening. He nodded, wiped his spectacles, put them on again, and said, "He may not come in my time, perhaps; but the lad in bed yonder may live to see him and stand by him when the work begins in earnest." The old man nodded, and the longer he looked at his Holger Danske the more clearly he saw that he had turned out a beautiful piece of work. The colours seemed to brighten, the armour glowed like wrought steel, the hearts on the Danish shield grew redder, and the lions with their gold crowns leaped and sprung.

"It is the finest national arms in the world," said the old man. "Lions and hearts—emblems of strength and love!" He looked at the topmost lion and thought of King Canute, who chained England fast to Denmark's throne; he looked at the second lion and thought of Waldemar, who gave peace to Denmark, and subdued the Vandal's lands; he looked at the third lion and thought of Margaret, who united into one Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. But as he looked at the hearts they burned and brightened into flames; each stirred in its place, and by its side stood a spirit.

The first flame led him into a dark and narrow prison-cell; there sat a fair and queenly woman, Eleanor Ulfeld,* daughter of Christian IV.; the flame lighted on her heart—and blended with it like a glowing rose—the

* This royal lady, whose only crime was her love to her husband, Corfitz Ulfeld, who was charged with high treason, was imprisoned for twenty-two years by her bitter enemy, Queen Sophia Amelia.

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purest, noblest heart that ever beat in the breast of one of Denmark's daughters.

"That is one heart in Denmark's shield," said the old grandfather.

The second flame beckoned him on to the open sea where the cannon thundered and the ships lay veiled in smoke; the flame spread like a military badge of honour on Haitfeld's breast, as he blew up his ship and crew to save the Danish fleet.*

The third flame led him to the squalid huts of Greenland, where Hans Egede† the pastor, ministered with love, in deed and word; the flame traced a star upon his heart—another heart on Denmark's shield.

This time the old man's fancy outran the flame, for he knew well whither it would lead him. In the peasant's lowly cottage stood Frederick VI., and wrote his name with chalk along the beam;‡ the flame leapt and quivered on his breast, and in the peasant's home his heart became a heart on the Danish shield. The old grandfather dried his eyes, for he had known and served King Frederick, with the silver hair and kind blue eyes; he folded his hands and gazed still before him. Then his young daughter-in-law came up and told him it

* In the naval engagement near Kjöge, between the Danes and Swedes, Haitfeld's ship, *Danebrog*, caught fire, and as it was drifting dangerously near the Danish fleet and city, he ordered it to be blown up.

† Hans Egede laboured fifteen years as a Christian teacher in Greenland, in the face of terrible difficulties and privations.

‡ On his journey along the western coast of Jutland, King Frederick entered the cottage of a poor woman, who begged him to write his name on one of the beams of her cottage, as a token of his visit. He did much towards improving the condition of his poorer subjects, and his coffin was carried by Danish peasants to his grave at Roskilde.

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was late—supper was ready, and it was time for him to rest.

“Why, what a beautiful figure you have carved, grandfather!” she cried. “Holger Danske, and our old shield. It seems to me as if I have seen that face before.”

“No; you cannot have seen it,” said the old man; “but I have seen it, and I have tried to carve it in the wood just as I see it in my memory. It was long ago, when the English were lying in the harbour, on the second of April,* when we showed them we were still the old Danish sea-king. As I was fighting on board the *Denmark*, in Steen Bille’s squadron, a man stood by my side, and the balls seemed to fear him. Merrily he sang out old sea-songs and fought like some one more than man. I remember his face now; but where he came from, or whither he went, neither I nor any other of us knew. I have often thought it might have been Holger Danske, who had swum out from Kronenburg to help us in our hour of need. That was what I thought, and this is his likeness.”

The figure threw long shadows over the wall and ceiling; it seemed as if the real Holger Danske stood behind it, for the shadow rose and fell; but perhaps it was only because the light flickered on the table. The young woman kissed the old grandfather, and led him to his arm-chair by the table, while she and her husband, who was the father of the little child asleep in the bed, sat down to eat their supper. The old man spoke of the Danish lion and the Danish hearts—of strength and gentleness: he said that there was a strength other than that which lay in the sword, and pointed to the

* The naval combat between the Danes and the English, under Parker and Nelson.

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bookshelves where stood Holberg's Comedies, which one reads again and again, and fancies one recognizes in them all the characters of bygone days.

"He, too, knew how to strike," said the old grandfather; "how to slash the follies and eccentricities of men." And looking across to the calendar, with the picture of the Round Tower,* which hung by the looking glass, "He was another," continued the old man; "Tycho Brahe wielded the sword, not to smite flesh and blood, but to strike out a clearer path up to the stars of heaven. And he, too, who sprang from my old father's class, the wood carver's son, he whom we have seen ourselves, whose white hair and strong, broad shoulders, are known in all lands—he was a sculptor; I am but a carver! Yes; Holger Danske can come in many forms; so that through all the world one sees the might of Denmark. Shall we drink to Bertel's† health?"

But the little child in bed saw clearly the old Kronenburg towering above the Oere Sound; he saw the real Holger Danske, sitting alone in the deep vault, his beard grown fast to the marble table, dreaming of all that happened overhead. Holger Danske dreamed too of all that went on in the little room; he heard every word, and nodded in his dreams.

"Yes," he cried, "keep me in your hearts and in your memory, ye Danish folk. In the hour of danger, I shall be at hand."

And the clear daylight fell over Kronenburg; the wind bore along the sound of the hunting horns from the country round; the ships sailed by with their greeting

* The observatory in Kopenhagen.

† Bertel Thorwaldsen.

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" Boom ! Boom !" And Kronenburg answered " Boom ! Boom !" But Holger Danske woke not, let them thunder as loud as they might, for they only meant " Good morning !" " Good evening !"

They must thunder in a different fashion before he wakes ; but he *will* wake, for there is life in Holger Danske.





A Heart-felt Sorrow.

THERE are, properly speaking, two parts to this story ; the first part could very well be left out, only it gives us some explanations which may be useful.

We were staying once in a country house ; the master and mistress were away on a visit, and during their absence a good lady arrived from the neighbouring town, bringing with her a pug-dog, and

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some shares in a tan-yard which belonged to her. The shares were for sale, and we advised her to put them in an envelope and address it to the master of the house, "General of the commissariat-department, knight, &c., &c."

She listened with great attention, took the pen, paused, and begged us to say it again very slowly. We did so, and then she began to write, but in the middle of "General of the commi—" she stopped, sighed deeply, and said, "I am but a woman!" As she wrote, the pug curled himself up on the floor and growled; he too was travelling for his health and amusement, and they might have offered him something better than the floor to lie on. As far as his looks went, he was a mixture of snub-nose and beer-barrel.

"He won't bite any one," said the lady; "he has no teeth. He is quite one of the family—faithful, but crusty. That, however, is because my grandchildren tease him; they are fond of playing at weddings, and they will make him act the bridesmaid. It is such a trouble to him, poor little doggie."

She sent off her papers, and lifted the pug into her arms.—That is the first part that could have been left out.

PART THE SECOND.

The pug died.

It was about a week later; we arrived at the town, and took rooms in the inn. Our windows looked into a courtyard, which was divided into two parts by a wooden wall. In one part there hung all manner of hides and skins, dressed and undressed: it was the widow's tan-yard. Her pug had died that very morning, and was buried in the yard; and the grandchildren of the widow—I mean the tanner's widow, for the pug had never

A HEART-FELT SORROW.

been married—were closing in the grave; such a well-made grave, that it must have been a pleasure to lie in it.

Sand was strewn over it, and a neat row of flower pots placed all round; on the top was a broken beer bottle, with the neck uppermost; it was not at all allegorical.

The children danced round the grave, and the eldest of them, a practical youngster of seven years old, proposed that they should exhibit the grave to all the children in the alley at the back, the admittance fee to be one trouser-button for each person. Every boy would be sure to have a trouser-button, and could give one to a little girl. The proposal was agreed to by all.

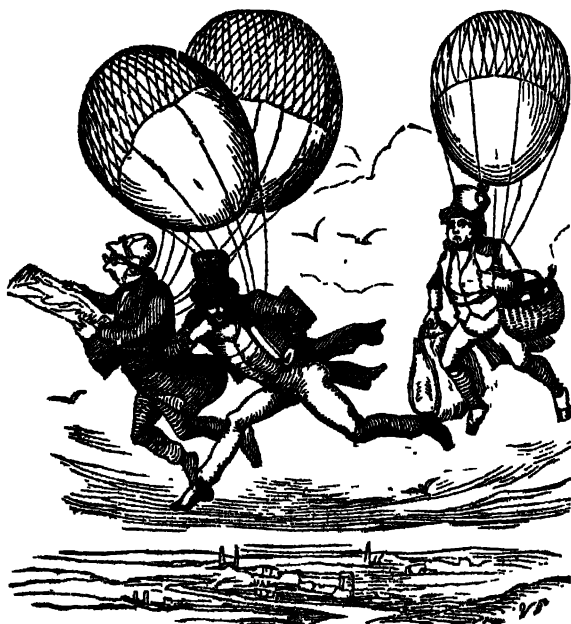
All the children from the alley—nay, even out of the little side street, came crowding in, and every one brought a button, so that the town was full of boys going about with only one brace to their trousers; but then they had seen the pug's grave, and the sight was worth far more than that.

Outside in the street, before the tan-yard gates, stood a little ragged girl, with a pretty face, blue eyes, and curling hair. She did not cry or speak to any one, but every time the gates were opened, she cast a long, wistful glance into the space beyond. She knew she could not go in, for she had no button, so she waited sorrowfully till the gates were shut, and every one had gone away, and then she sat down, with her face hidden in her little brown hands, and cried as if her heart would break. She was the only one who had not seen the pug's grave. It was a sorrow as deep as the sorrows of grown men and women.

We saw all this from above—and seen from above, it—like so many troubles of our own and other people's—can call forth a smile.

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That is the story, and whoever does not understand it, had better take some shares in the widow's tan-yard.



In Years to Come.



ES, in years to come we shall fly on the wings of steam high in the air, over the mighty ocean. The young inhabitants of America will visit the old Continent of

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Europe. They will come to admire the ancient monuments and ruined cities, just as we make pilgrimages to the fallen glories of Southern Asia.

In years to come they will certainly visit us.

The Thames, the Rhine, and the Danube will roll on as ever; Mont Blanc will still stand with its summit veiled in snow; the northern lights will play over the ice and snow. One generation after another will have mingled with the dust; numbers of the great ones of to-day are forgotten; forgotten as entirely as those who lie under the hill on which the rich huckster, to whom the land belongs, has set up a bench where he can sit and look out over his waving cornfields.

The air-ship comes: it is crowded with passengers, for the journey is quicker than by sea; the submarine electro-magnetic wire has already telegraphed the number of the passengers. Already Europe is in sight, it is the Irish coast that lies beneath them; but the passengers sleep on, they do not wish to be waked till they are exactly over England. There they will tread the country of Shakespeare, as the intellectual ones of the party have it—the home of politics and machinery, as others say.

Here they stay for a whole day: they are a busy race but they can yet afford so much time for England and Scotland.

On they go, through the tunnel under the Channel to France. They speak of Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Molière; the scholars among them have much to say of the ancient classic school; healths are drunk to the memory of heroes, poets, and scientific men unknown to us, but who are said to have been born in Paris—the crater of Europe.

The air-ship flies over the land which sent out Columbus, where Cortez was born, and Calderan sang in

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rhythmic verse; enchanting, black-eyed donnas still live in the sunny valleys, and the songs tell of the Alhambra and the Cid.

Through the air, over the sea, to Italy, to the Eternal City. It has disappeared; the Campagna is desolate; a few vestiges are shown of St. Peter's Church, but their genuineness is doubted.

Away to Greece to sleep for a night in the splendid hotel on the summit of Olympus; then *that* is done; on to the Bosphorus, to rest an hour or two and see the place where once Byzantium stood—there, where the Sagas speak of Turkish harems, a few poor fishermen are spreading out their nets. Above, the ruins of mighty towns on the rushing Danube; towns unknown to our day; here and there the air-ship descends, and the travellers linger to inspect the monuments left among them. Again they wing their rapid flight.

Germany lies below them; once a network of railway and canals. The land where Luther spoke, Goethe sang, and Mozart wielded the sceptre of harmony. Great names shine out in science and in art, but we know them not. One whole day is given to Germany and one to the north—the birthplace of Oerstedt and Linnæus—to Norway, home of the ancient heroes and of the Normans. Iceland is taken on the return journey: the Geyser foams no longer, Hecla is extinguished; but an eternal stone table of the Saga still holds fast the island rock in the midst of the stormy seas.

"There is a great deal to be seen in Europe," say the young Americans; "and we have seen it all in eight days. It can be easily done by following the directions of the 'great traveller'—here they mention one of their contemporaries—"in his famous work 'Through Europe in Eight Days.'"



"The children mounted the stick, and it became alive to them."

Thumbelina.



HERE was once a woman who dearly longed to have a little child; but she did not know where to find one. She went to an old witch, and said to her, "I do so wish for a little child; can you not tell me where I may obtain one?"

"Nothing is easier," said the witch. "Here is a barley corn; but it is not one of those which the farmer sows in his field, or that the fowls eat. Put it into a flower pot, and you will soon see something."

"Thank you," said the woman, and she gave the witch twelve shillings, for that was the price of it. Then she went home and planted the barley corn; a beautiful flower grew out of it, it looked like a tulip, only the leaves were as tightly closed as the leaves of a bud.

"That is a lovely flower," said the woman, and she kissed the red and yellow petals. At her kiss the flower opened with a loud crack. It was a real tulip, such as one can see anywhere; but in the centre of the flower, seated on one of the green velvet stamina, was a tiny girl—a beautiful, delicate little creature, no taller than

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half one's thumb, so that when she saw her the woman named her Thumbelina.

A polished walnut shell was made into a cradle for her, and there Thumbelina slept soundly on a bed of violets, with a large rose leaf for a coverlet. In the day time she lived on a tulip leaf which floated across a plate of water; the mother placed a pretty wreath of flowers round the edge, and gave Thumbelina two strong white horsehairs so that she could row her little raft all round the plate. It was a pretty sight to see her; and prettier still to hear her sing in a sweet little voice as clear as a silver bell.

As she lay in bed one night, an old toad came in through a broken window pane; a great, ugly, wet toad. She hopped on to the table, and saw Thumbelina asleep under her rose leaf.

"She would be a nice wife for my son," said the toad, and taking up the walnut shell where Thumbelina lay asleep, she hopped back again through the window and out into the garden. Near the garden ran a wide brook with marshy banks, and that was where the old toad and her son lived. Ugh! he was an ugly, frightful creature, the very image of his mother. "Koax, koax, brekerekekex!" that was all he could say when he saw the pretty little thing in her cradle.

"Don't speak so loud, you will wake her," said the old toad; "she is as light as a feather and could easily get away. We will put her on one of the large water-lily leaves in the brook; it will seem like an island to her, tiny as she is. She will not be able to escape from it, and we shall have plenty of time to get ready the state-room under the marsh, where you can begin housekeeping."

Early in the morning poor little Thumbelina awoke,

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and when she saw where she was, she cried bitterly, for the water closed round the leaf on every side, and it was impossible to reach the land.

The old toad was very busy down in the swamp, decking out her room with sedge and yellow rushes to make it all quite comfortable for her new daughter-in-law. Then she swam out with her ugly son to the leaf where Thumbelina sat ; they came to fetch the bed which was to be put in the bridal chamber before the bride arrived. The old toad bowed low in the water before Thumbelina, and said to her, "This is my son. He is to be your husband, and you will have a beautiful house down in the swamp."

"Koax, koax, brekerekek!" was all the son could say for himself.

Then they took the pretty little cradle, and swam away with it ; but Thumbelina sat alone on the green leaf and cried ; she did not want to go and live with the frightful old toad, or to marry the ugly son. Now, the little fishes who were swimming to and fro in the water, had seen the old toad, and heard every word she had said ; they leaped up to look at the little girl, and directly they saw her they all thought her so pretty that they felt quite sorry to think of her going to live with the old toad. And what is more, they determined that it should never happen ; so they swam up to the stem of the lily leaf, and bit it through. Away sailed the leaf down the brook, and bore Thumbelina swiftly with it—far away, where the toad could never reach her.

Thumbelina sailed by one town after another ; the birds on the bushes saw her, and sang, "Oh, what a sweet little girl !" On floated the leaf, and took her at last right out of the country. A pretty, white butterfly fluttered round her head, and settled at last on the leaf

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where she lived. Thumbelina was glad of his friendship; it was so lovely now where she was sailing; the toad could not reach her; the sun shone on the water till it sparkled like liquid silver. She took off her sash, and tied one end of it round the butterfly, and the other end to the leaf, so that now it went faster than ever with the butterfly for a sail.

Suddenly up flew a large cockchafer; he saw Thumbelina, and pounced upon her in a moment, seizing her round the waist, and flying away with her to the top of a tree—the green leaf went sailing on, and the poor butterfly with it, for he was tied fast, and could not get away.

Oh! how frightened poor Thumbelina was when the great cockchafer flew away with her up to the tree. She grieved most of all for the poor white butterfly whom she had tied to the leaf, for if he could not get away, he would certainly die of hunger. But the cockchafer did not trouble himself about that. He sat down by her on one of the leaves of the tree, gave her some honey to eat, and told her she was very pretty, although she was not at all like a cockchafer. In a short time, the other cockchafers who lived in the tree came to call upon them. They looked at Thumbelina, and said, "Why, she has only two legs; that looks dreadful!" "She has no feelers," said another. "How slender she is round the waist! fie, she looks like a human being! How extremely ugly she is!" That was what the lady cockchafers said, but in reality Thumbelina was lovely, and the cockchafer who had carried her off owned it. But when all the others said she was ugly, he began to think it must be true, so he told her he would not have her, she could go where she liked. They flew down with her, and placed her on a daisy. There she sat and

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and feathers all complete ; it must have died just lately, and been buried where he had made the passage."

The mole then took a piece of decayed wood in his mouth ; it shone like fire in the darkness as he went before them along the gloomy passage. When they came to the dead bird the mole pushed his broad nose through the earth above so as to make a hole. The daylight fell through and shone on the body of a dead swallow ; the pretty wings were closely folded, the head and claws hidden under the feathers, the poor bird had doubtless died of cold. Thumbelina's little heart ached with pity ; she dearly loved all singing birds, for had they not warbled and trilled to please her all the summer through ? but the mole pushed the bird aside with his crooked legs and said, "He will not chirp again. It must be a pitiable lot to be born a bird. Heaven be praised that that will not befall any of my children ; a bird like this has nothing in the world but his tweet, tweet ! and so he has to die of hunger in the winter."

"Yes, indeed, that is spoken like a sensible man," said the field-mouse. "What does tweet, tweet do for him when the winter comes ? Leaves him to die of hunger, and to perish with cold. And yet it is considered genteel !"

Thumbelina did not speak, but when the others had turned their backs on the dead bird, she stooped down, parted the feathers on the head, and kissed the closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was he who sang so sweetly to me in summer," she said ; "how happy he made me, the poor beautiful bird !"

The mole then stopped up the hole that let in the daylight, and escorted the ladies home. But at night Thumbelina could not sleep : she got out of bed and

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plaited a beautiful large rug of soft hay; when it was finished she took it with some fine flower stamina, as warm and light as cotton, which she had found in the field mouse's sitting room, and ran out to the dead swallow. She laid the stamina carefully round him, spread the coverlet over him so that he might lie warm on the earth.

"Farewell, kind, beautiful bird!" she said. "Farewell, and many thanks for your sweet singing in the summer time, when the trees were green, and the warm sun shone down upon us." She leaned her head against the bird's heart. Now the swallow was not dead, but only numb with cold, and when the warmth stole over him again, his life came back.

For in the autumn the swallows fly away to warmer lands, and if one is late and left behind, the cold seizes it, and it falls down as if it were dead, and lies helpless while the cold snow buries it alive.

Thumbelina trembled with fright, for the bird was very large in comparison with a little thing an inch long like herself; but she was a brave little maiden, and she folded the warm wraps closer round the bird, and ran to fetch a balsam leaf, which she had used as a coverlet for herself, and that she laid over the bird's head.

The next night she stole out to him again; he was alive, but very weak; he could only just open his eyes and look for a moment at Thumbelina, as she stood over him with a piece of decayed wood—her only lantern—in her hand.

"Thank you, my pretty little maiden," whispered the poor swallow; "I am so beautifully warm now. I shall soon get back my strength, and be able to fly away to the warm sunshine."

"Ah, not yet," she answered; "it is too cold; it

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snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed; I will nurse you gladly."

She brought him some water in a leaf, and when he had drunk he told her how he had torn his wing on a thorn bush, and could not keep up with the others; how they flew away without him, and how he fell senseless to the earth. After that he could not remember any more; he did not even know how he had come where he lay then.

The swallow stayed there all the winter through, and Thumbelina fed him and waited on him, without saying a word to the mole or the field mouse, because they could not endure birds.

When the spring came, and the sun had warmed the earth, the swallow said good bye to Thumbelina. She opened the hole which the mole had made. The sunlight poured in gloriously, and the swallow asked her if she would not come with him. He said she might sit on his back, and they could fly into the green wood. But Thumbelina knew it would vex the old field mouse if she were to leave her in that way. "No, I cannot come," she said.

"Farewell, farewell, you good, dear little maiden," said the swallow. He flew away into the warm sunshine. Thumbelina watched him go, and the tears rose in her eyes, for she dearly loved the poor lost bird.

"Tweet, tweet!" sang the swallow, as he flew towards the green-wood. Thumbelina was very sad; she could never get leave to go out into the sunshine; the corn which had been sown in the field above her mistress's house shot up, and looked like a lofty, pathless forest to the little maiden of an inch long.

"You are going to be married now, Thumbelina," said the old mouse. "My neighbour has proposed for

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you. What a piece of luck it is for a poor girl like you ! You must set about making your wedding trousseau now, woollen and linen as well ; for nothing must be lacking in the outfit of a mole's bride."

Thumbelina was obliged to sit down to the distaff, and the field-mouse hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. The mole came to pay a visit every evening, and he always said that when the summer was over the sun would not be so hot ; as it was, it burned up the ground as hard as a stone. When the summer was over, the mole and Thumbelina were to be married. But she was not at all happy, for she could not bear the tiresome mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it set, she went to the door, and when the wind parted the ears of corn, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful it was in the light, and longed to see the swallow once again. But he never came again ; he must have flown far away in the greenwood.

When autumn came, Thumbelina's outfit was quite finished. "You shall be married in a month," said the field mouse. But Thumbelina cried, and said she would not marry the tiresome mole.

"Stuff and nonsense !" said the mouse. "Don't be perverse, or else I shall bite you with my white teeth. He will make you a very handsome husband. The queen herself has not such a black velvet coat. He has kitchen and cellar full ; you ought to feel most thankful."

The wedding day arrived. The mole came to fetch Thumbelina ; she was to go and live with him deep under the earth, and never come out to see the warm sun, for the mole would not allow that. The poor little thing was very sorrowful ; she had obtained leave from

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the field-mouse to go out, and say good-bye to the beautiful sunlight.

"Farewell, dear golden sun!" she cried, stretching out her arms. She walked a little way through the corn; it had been reaped now, and there was nothing left but the dry stubble. "Farewell, farewell!" she cried. She threw her arms round a little scarlet flower that blossomed near. "Give my love to the swallow if ever you see him," she cried.

"Tweet, tweet!" It sounded high overhead. She looked up; there was the little swallow just flying by. As soon as he saw Thumbelina he was delighted, and she began to tell him how much she dreaded marrying the stupid mole, and living deep under the earth, where the sun never shone. She could not help crying.

"The cold winter is coming now," said the swallow. "I am going to fly away to warmer countries. Will you come with me? You can sit on my back, and we will fly far away from the ugly mole and his gloomy room; over the mountains to warm lands, where the sun shines brighter than it does here, where there are lovely flowers, and it is always summer. Fly away with me, you sweet little Thumbelina, who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark vault yonder."

"Yes, I will come," said Thumbelina. She sat down on the bird's back, with her feet resting on his outspread wing; and when she had tied her sash firmly round one of the strongest feathers, the swallow rose high into the air, and flew fast over wood and lake, and over the high mountains crowned with snow. Thumbelina shivered in the cold air, and crept under the bird's warm feathers, peeping out from time to time to look at the beautiful scenery below.

At last they came to warmer lands. . There the sun

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shone twice as brightly as it shines here; the sky was twice as high; in the valleys and on the hedgerows grew the most beautiful green and purple grapes; in the woods hung pale lemons and golden oranges; the scent of balsam and myrtle filled the air, and along the highways ran lovely children, playing with large, bright hued butterflies. The swallow flew on and on, and it grew lovelier and lovelier. Under the tall, stately trees, by the purple lake, stood an ancient castle of pure, white marble. Vine leaves twined round the stainless columns; among these were many swallows' nests, and in one of the nests lived the swallow who carried Thumbelina.

"Here is my house," said the swallow. "But it is not fit that you should live there; my arrangements will not permit of your being satisfied with it. Choose out one of the most beautiful flowers that grow down yonder; I will fly with you to it, and you can live as happy as the day is long."

"That will be glorious," she said, clapping her little hands.

Down below lay a great white marble column which had fallen to the earth, and was broken in three pieces: among the ruins grew the loveliest white flowers. The swallow flew down with Thumbelina, and placed her on one of the broad leaves. But what a surprise awaited her! In the midst of the flower sat a little elf as white and transparent as glass; on his head was a golden crown, brilliant wings fell from his shoulders, and he was scarcely taller than Thumbelina. He was the elf of the flower: there was one in every blossom, an elf man or an elf maid, but he was the elfin king.

"Oh, how handsome he is!" cried Thumbelina to the swallow.

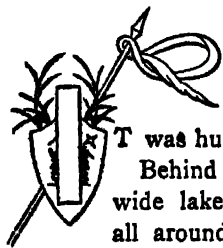
THUMBELINA.

The elfin prince was terribly frightened at the swallow, for it was a giant bird in comparison with him; but when he saw Thumbelina he was enraptured; she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. He took off his golden crown and placed it on her hair, asked her her name, and begged her to become his bride. If she would consent he told her that she should be queen of all the flowers. Now this was certainly a very different kind of husband from the toad's son, and the mole with the black velvet fur; and Thumbelina said yes to the handsome prince. And out of every flower came the elfin men and maidens; all delicate and beautiful to look upon. All of them brought Thumbelina a present, but the best of all was a pair of lovely white wings, which were fastened on her shoulders, so that she could fly from flower to flower. Then there were great rejoicings: the little swallow sat overhead in his nest, and had to sing the wedding song. He sang it as well as ever he could, but he was sad at heart, for he loved Thumbelina, and had hoped never to part from her.

"Farewell, farewell!" sang the swallow, with a sorrowful voice, as he left the warm countries and flew away to Denmark. He has a nest there, outside the window of a man who can tell fairy tales: to him he sang "Tweet, tweet," and that is how we learned the whole story.



Everything in its Right Place.



T was hundreds of years ago.

Behind the wood, on the shores of the wide lake, stood an old baronial hall, and all around it ran a deep moat where sedge and reeds grew rank. Close to the draw-bridge by the entrance gate was an old willow that bent above the sedge.

The tramp of horse and sound of horns rose from the pass below, and the little maid who minded the geese hurriedly drove her flock from the bridge as the hunt galloped up; it was so near at hand that she had only just time to spring on to the high parapet of the bridge to prevent herself from being ridden over. Scarcely more than a child as yet, she had a slender, girlish figure, a sweet true-hearted look in her face, and clear, lovely eyes; but the baron saw in her neither charm nor grace. As he galloped by he lowered his hunting-whip and, thrusting the butt end of it against her breast, he pushed her backwards from the bridge.

"Everything in its right place," he cried, in his brutal merriment; "into the swamp with you." That was his notion of wit, and all his followers joined in his loud laughter, the huntsmen shouted and swore, the hounds bayed in chorus.

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The poor child caught at a branch of the old willow-tree to stay her fall, and for awhile she managed to support herself above the swamp; when the huntsmen and the dogs had disappeared through the castle gates she tried to lift herself up, but the branch snapped off from the tree, and she would have fallen helplessly into the marsh had not a strong arm from above seized



and rescued her. It was the arm of a wandering pedler who had watched the scene from a little distance, and hurried to the rescue.

"Everything in its right place," he said after the noble baron, as he drew the girl safely to the land. He tried to replace the broken bough where it had stood before, but—"everything in its right place"—it would

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not fit, so he planted it in the moist earth. "Grow and thrive if you can, and bring forth a flute for the people at the castle yonder," he said, for he would gladly have played the Rogue's March to His Excellency the baron and to all his noble kith and kin. Then he went on his way to the castle—not into the great hall of course, he was of too low degree for that—but into the servants' hall, and the maids and valets looked over his wares and chaffered with him. From the dining-room above, came the sound of frantic revelry; the guests were supposed to be singing, and they certainly did their best. Loud laughter, blended with the baying of the hounds, came through the open window: all was riot and drunkenness; wine and strong ale foamed in the horns and goblets; the dogs shared the repast, and every now and then some roistering squire would stoop to caress the four-footed favourites.

The pedler was sent for, but only that he might serve as their laughing stock. The wine had got into every head and driven out every gleam of sense and reason; the guests poured ale into a stocking for the pedler to drink quickly; that was considered sparkling wit, and brought forth ready laughter; herds of cattle, serfs, and tenant farms were staked on a throw of the dice and gambled away.

"Everything in its right place," repeated the pedler, as he escaped safe at last from the new Sodom and Gomorrha, as he called the place; "Here, on the open highway, is *my* place—I was certainly out of place up there." The little girl who kept the geese nodded to him smiling, as he went on his way.

Days and weeks passed by, and it was seen that the broken willow branch which the pedler had planted by

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the castle moat, was still fresh and green ; nay, that it even put out two fresh shoots : the little girl stopped to look at it as she drove her geese ; it had evidently taken root, and the child was glad, for she looked upon it as her own tree.

And the tree certainly thrived and shot upward ; but everything else belonging to the castle was brought steadily down by rioting and high play, for no house can stand secure on those foundations.

Before six years were past, the castle was sold to a rich tradesman, and the baron wandered out from his ancestral halls with a beggar's staff in his hand. The tradesman was no other than the poor pedler to whom the master of the house had given ale in a stocking ; but honesty and industry bring wealth and honour, and now the pedler was lord of the castle. From that day a pack of cards was not allowed within the walls. " Cards are the devil's books," said the new master ; " when the devil first saw the Bible he set about making a pack of cards to have something to set against it." The new proprietor married, and whom else should he marry but the little maid whose life he had saved on the bridge ; she had grown up pious and gentle, and in her new dress she looked as beautiful as a young lady of rank. How did it all happen ? Oh ! but that is too long a story for these busy days ; it *did* happen, and that is the most important.

Everything was ordered wisely and well in the castle now ; the master watched over the out-door duties, the mistress looked to all within, and a blessing seemed to fall on both. Wealth attracts wealth ; and the old castle was repaired and beautified ; the moat was cleared out and fruit trees planted in its place ; all was bright and homelike, and as clean as a pink. In the long winter

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evenings the mistress sat among her maids at the spinning-wheel in the great hall, on Sundays the Bible



was read aloud by the justice himself—the pedler in his old age had been made a magistrate.

Children and grandchildren were born and grew up;

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all of them received a good education, but all were by no means equally clever—and that is the case in many families. Meanwhile the broken bough by the bridge had grown into a splendid tree. “*That* is our genealogical tree,” the two old people used to say; “that willow must be honoured and preserved,” they said to the children, and those who had not any brains to spare heard them.

A hundred years passed by.

We are come now to our own day: the lake has changed into a moor; the ancient castle has disappeared; a pool of water by a few crumbling stones is all that remains of the bridge; and by them there stands a stately old tree with hanging branches—it was the genealogical tree; and it stands still, and shows how beautiful a willow can be when it is left to itself. The trunk was cleft asunder from the root to the branches; the storms had bent it a little, but it still stood there, and out of every crack and rift where the wind had carried a sprinkling of earth grew flowers and waving grasses, while overhead between the branches was a perfect hanging garden of flowering bramble and wild raspberry; nay, even a tiny mistletoe had taken root in it, and stood out bright and clear against the knotty trunk; and the old tree mirrored itself in the water whenever the wind drove the duckweed into a far corner of the pond. A field path led close by the tree.

On the wooded height with the beautiful view stood the modern manor house, large and stately, with such clear glass panes that it seemed as if no glass were there at all. The terraced steps which led to the entrance were framed with roses and exotics. The lawn was as soft and velvety as if each separate blade of grass were trimmed night and morning. In the rooms were price-

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less pictures, velvet and brocaded sofas and fauteuils, marble tables, numberless books bound in rare bindings ; everything bespoke the dwelling place of wealthy people, for this was the seat of the baron and his family.

The place corresponded with the people. Everything in its right place, was the motto of the house ; and therefore all the old paintings, which had been looked upon with reverence in the former castle, were now hung in the corridor that led to the servants' rooms, and considered mere lumber ; especially two portraits—one of a man, in a claret-coloured coat and tie wig, and the other of a lady, with powdered hair, and holding a rose in her hand ; both of them surrounded with a wreath of willow. These two portraits showed many a rent and tear, because the baron's little son used to set them up for a target for his arrows : they were the likenesses of the justice and his wife, the founders of the family.

"But they do not really belong to our family," said the children : "he was a pedler, and she kept geese. They were not like papa and mamma."

The son of the village pastor was tutor at the castle ; and one day he went out walking with the two boys and their elder sister, who had lately been confirmed. Their path lay close to the old willow by the bridge, and as they walked the sister plaited wreaths of fieldflowers ; everything in its right place, so that the wreath made one beautiful whole. Meanwhile she could hear quite well all that was said ; and she liked to hear the pastor's son speak of the powers of nature, or relate the story of heroic men and women : she was herself a fine character, noble in thought and will, and with a heart that beat with love towards everything that God has created. They lingered by the old willow, for the youngest of the children insisted on having a flute cut for him out of the old willow-

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tree—he had had them cut out of other willows, and the tutor broke off a small branch.

“Oh, do not do that!” said the young lady; but she spoke too late. “That is our famous old tree, and I love it dearly. They laugh at me at home about it, but I do not mind that. There is a legend belonging to this willow-tree.”

And then she related what we know already: the story of the tree, of the old castle, of the pedler, and the girl who kept the geese: how they met each other for the first time at the bridge, and afterwards became the founders of the present family.

“They would never accept any patent of nobility, the dear old people,” she said. “Their motto was, ‘Everything in its place,’ and they thought that would not be the case if they purchased a title with money. My grandfather, who afterwards took the title of baron, was their son. They say he was a very scholarly man, and well received by princes and princesses at the Court festivals. He is the favourite at home; but I do not know how it is, there seems to me something about that old couple which draws my heart to them. How homelike, how patriarchal, it must have been at the old house, when the mistress sat at the spinning wheel among her maids, and the master read aloud out of the Bible!”

“They must have been delightful and sensible people,” said the tutor; and then the conversation turned, almost of itself, on titled and untitled folk. To hear the pastor’s son speak of nobility, one would scarcely have thought he belonged to an inferior class.

“It is a happiness to belong to a family which has distinguished itself, and so to receive a spur and impulse towards all that is noble. It is a happiness to possess a family name which serves as a card of introduction into

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the best circles. Nobility means nobleness: it is a gold coin stamped with the impress of its own worth. The present tone of thought—a tone which many poets echo instinctively—is that everything belonging to high rank is mean and base; while the lower one descends in the social scale the more lofty and exalted one finds everything. But that is not my opinion, for it is false. In the higher classes one finds many touchingly beautiful traits; I could mention several, but this is one my mother told me. She was visiting at the house of a person of rank in the town: my grandmother had, I believe, acted as foster mother to the dowager countess. My mother and the noble lord were alone in the room, when the latter saw in the courtyard below a poor cripple who used to come every Sunday on her crutches to receive a weekly gift. 'There is that poor old woman,' said the nobleman; 'walking is so painful for her,' and before my mother had time to take in the sense of his words he had rushed out of the room and run downstairs to save the old woman the trouble of coming to fetch the customary bounty. It was but a slight action, but like the gift of the poor widow in the Bible, it strikes a chord that re-echoes in the depth of every human heart; and it is to that depth that the poet ought to appeal, especially in our own days, where what is wanted is to soften and to appease. But when a sprig of humanity, because he is of noble birth and possesses a genealogical tree, rears and neighs in the street like an Arab steed, or says of a house where commoners are received, 'One meets there people out of the gutter'—then one sees nobility in its corruption and decay—worn as a mask such as *Thespis* made of old, and the world makes merry when the wearer is pierced through with the shafts of ridicule."

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That was what the tutor said; it was rather a long speech, but meanwhile the flute was cut out.

The castle was filled with visitors; guests from the country, and from the capital; ladies dressed with or without taste; the large reception-rooms were crowded. The neighbouring pastors stood in a deferential group in one corner; it looked rather like a funeral, but it was really an entertainment, only the amusement had scarcely begun yet.

There was to be an amateur concert, and the baron's youngest child brought in his flute cut out of the old willow-tree; but as neither he nor his father could bring a note out of it, it was not of much use. However, there was plenty of music and singing, chiefly of the kind that is liked best by the performers, but in other respects charming.

"You are a virtuoso," said a baronet—the son of his father—to the tutor. "You can make a flute and then play on it; that is true genius, and deserves all homage. One is obliged now to advance with the times. You will delight us by an air on your little instrument—will you not?" With these words he presented the pastor's son with the flute that was cut out of the old willow by the pool, and announced loudly that the tutor was going to play a solo on the flute.

It was easy to see that it was done to bring him into ridicule, and the tutor refused to play, although he was a fine player; but every one pressed and urged him so vehemently that at last he raised the flute to his lips.

It was a wonderful flute. One tone—shriller and louder than the whistle of a steam-engine—sounded far and wide over courtyard, garden, and woodlands; far into the country round for miles away; with it came a storm wind that roared aloud, "Everything in its right

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place,"—and away flew His Excellency the baron on the wings of the wind into the hut of a poor shepherd, and the shepherd flew—not into the hall, he could not get so far as that, but into the lobby among the smart serving men who strutted up and down in their fine liveries; and were paralysed at the mere thought of such a person's sitting down to table with them. But within the hall, the young baroness flew to the seat of honour at the head of the table, and the pastor's son sat by her; they looked like a bridal pair. An old count, a scion of one of the oldest families in the land, remained untouched in his place of honour, for the flute was just, and so one ought to be. The amiable and witty baronet who had set the flute going, and who was the son of his father, flew head over heels into the hencoop, but not alone.

The flute was heard miles away, and the most singular things occurred: a rich banker's family who kept a carriage and four was blown out of the carriage, and could not even find room behind: two rich farmers who have shot up above their own corn-field in our own day, were dashed down into the ditch. It was a dangerous flute; luckily it split in two at the first note, and that was a good thing; for it was immediately put in the player's pocket—"Everything in its right place."

The following day not a word was said about what had happened; and that is what people mean by pocketing the flute. Everything had resumed its original position; only that the two old portraits of the pedler and the poor girl were left hanging on the wall of the great hall whither the flute had blown them; and since a connoisseur declared that they were painted by a master's hand, they were cleaned and restored. Everything in its right place—yes, and it will get there too. Eternity is long—longer than this story.

The Red Shoes.



HERE was once a pretty, delicate-looking little girl, who was so poor that all the summer through she was obliged to go barefoot, and even in the winter she had nothing but a pair of thick, wooden shoes, that made her little ankles red and painful.

In the same village there lived an old shoemaker's wife, and she cut out a pair of shoes from a piece of old, red cloth. These she sewed together, and sent as a present to Karen—that was the little girl's name. They were clumsy shoes, but the gift was kindly meant.

Now the red shoes reached Karen on the very day that her mother died, and she put them on then for the first time.

They certainly did not look much like mourning, but she wore them all the same, and walked in them behind the poor, mean coffin.

Just at the moment a large, old-fashioned carriage rolled by, and the kind old lady who was sitting inside felt sorry for the poor little orphan, and said to the clergyman, "If you will give that little girl to me, I will take charge of her, and bring her up."

Now Karen fancied that her good fortune was entirely owing to the red shoes, while in reality the old lady

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thought they were such ugly things that she had them burnt. But Karen herself was neatly and simply dressed; she learned to read and to sew, and people said she was nice-looking, but the looking-glass said, "You are beautiful."

One summer the queen of the country passed through the town where Karen lived, and brought with her the young princess, her daughter. All the people went in crowds to see them, and Karen was among the crowd; the little princess was brought to the window to be looked at. She wore a simple white dress, with neither train nor golden crown; but she had on a pair of beautiful red morocco slippers, much prettier than those which the old cobbler's wife had made for Karen. Nothing in the world can be compared with red shoes.

The time came soon for Karen to be confirmed. A new dress was made for her, and she was to have new shoes. The first shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot; he measured it in his own room, where there stood large glass cases of elegant slippers and polished boots. They looked charming, but the old lady, who had not very good sight, did not notice them much. Among the slippers was a pair of red morocco ones, like those which the princess had worn; the shoemaker said they had been ordered for a count's daughter, but they did not fit.

"Those are patent leather, are they not?" said the old lady; "they shine so."

"Yes, they do shine," said Karen. They fitted exactly, and were bought, but the old lady had no idea that they were red, or she would never have allowed Karen to wear them at her confirmation. But she did wear them.

Every one looked at her feet. When she entered

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the churchyard, the stone figures on the tombstones, and the portraits of the pastors and their wives, with stiff ruffles or long, black gowns, looked frowningly at her red shoes. Karen thought of nothing else, not when she knelt before God's altar; not when the priest spoke of her baptism vows; not when the hands of the bishop were laid upon her head in blessing. The organ pealed out solemnly, the lovely children's voices soared aloft, as the precentor led their chant, but Karen thought of nothing but the red shoes.

The next day the old lady was told by every one that Karen had worn red shoes, and she said it was a wicked thing to have done, and that in future Karen should never wear any but black shoes in church, even when she was grown up.

On the following Sunday Karen was to make her first Communion; she looked at the black shoes, then at the red, and, after a moment's pause, put on the red ones.

It was a glorious summer day; Karen and the old lady walked down the footpath, through the cornfields, where it was rather dusty. By the church door stood an old soldier, leaning on his crutch; his beard was of a strange reddish colour, and he bowed almost to the ground as the old lady approached. "Shall I dust your shoes?" he said. Karen held out her slender little foot. "What beautiful dancing shoes!" cried the old soldier. "Sit fast when you dance," he added, striking them smartly on the soles. The old lady gave the soldier some money, and went with Karen into the church.

Once more all the congregation looked at Karen's shoes; and, alas! the thought of them haunted the child's heart all the service through, so that she could not sing one psalm, nor utter one prayer.

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The people came out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen lifted up her foot to follow, when the old soldier cried out, "Oh, what beautiful dancing shoes!" She could not help making a few dancing steps, and when once she had begun, her feet went on of themselves; she could not stop them; it seemed as if the shoes had gained the mastery over her. She danced on round the churchyard. The coachman was obliged to run after her, seize her, and lift her into the carriage, and even then her feet kept on dancing, so that the old lady received many a kick. At last they pulled her shoes off, and then her feet could rest. The shoes were put up in a drawer, but Karen could not help going to look at them.

After a while the old lady was stricken down with illness, and it was said that she would never recover. She required constant care and attention, and who should have shown them to her if not Karen? But there was a grand ball to be held in the town that night, and Karen was invited. She looked at the red shoes, and thought it would be no harm,—she put them on—who was there to blame her?—and then she went to the ball, and began to dance. But when she wanted to go to the right, the shoes danced to the left; and when she tried to dance forward, the shoes carried her backward, on to the door, down the stairs, along the street, through the town gates, out into the dark wood.

A red light shone through the trees; she thought it was the moon, but it was the old soldier with his red beard. He nodded to her, and cried out, "Oh, what beautiful dancing shoes!"

Then she was frightened, and tried to take off the red shoes, but they stuck fast to her feet. She tore down her stockings, but it was all in vain. She was

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forced on, dancing merrily over meadow and field, in rain and sunshine, by day and night—oh, in the nights it was the most terrible.

She danced across the open churchyard, but the dead do not dance; they have something better to do. She tried to rest a moment on the pauper's grave, where the coarse ferns grew, but there was no rest for her. And as she danced by the church porch, she saw an angel standing there in a long, white robe; white wings fell from his shoulders to his feet, his face was stern and awful, and in his hand he held a gleaming sword.

"Dance on," he cried—"dance with thy red shoes till thou art cold in death; till thy flesh has shrunk to a bare skeleton. Dance on from door to door, and where the children are vain and insolent, knock at their door that they may fear. Dance on till——"

"Mercy!" cried Karen, but she could not hear the angel's answer, for the shoes carried her across the plain, over stick and stone, dancing, dancing on.

One day she danced by the door of a house which she knew well; the sounds of a funeral psalm came from within, a coffin strewn with flowers was carried out; it was the coffin of her old mistress, and at the sight Karen felt that she was indeed forsaken of men, and condemned by God's angel.

On she danced into the gloomy night; the shoes forced her through brier and marsh; her feet were torn and bleeding as they crossed the desolate heath, and neared a lonely hut. It was the dwelling of the public executioner, and Karen tapped at the window panes.

"Come out; come out," she cried. "I cannot come in, for I must dance."

"You do not know who I am," answered the execu-

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tioner. "It is I who strike off the heads of wicked men, and I see my axe is quivering now."

"Come out," cried Karen; "do not strike off my head, or I cannot repent me of my sin; but, strike off my feet with the red shoes."

Then she confessed all her sin, and the executioner struck off her feet with the red shoes—on they danced, the little feet, over the heath, and into the dark wood. The man made her a pair of wooden feet with crutches, and taught her the psalm which the penitents sing; and Karen kissed the hand that held the axe and limped away over the heath.

"Now I have suffered enough," she said, "I will go into the church that the people may see me;" but as she hurried to the church door, the red shoes danced in front of her and frightened her away.

All the week through she wept and was sorrowful, but on Sunday she said, "Now I have striven and suffered enough. I think I am as good as many of the people who sit so proudly in their pews." And she went boldly forward, but she could get no farther than the churchyard gate, for there were the red shoes and she shrank back in horror, and confessed her sin from her heart.

She went to the parsonage house and begged to be taken on as a servant; she promised to be diligent and to do all she could; she asked for no wages, but only for a quiet home among people who would help her to be good. They had compassion on her and let her come; she was now a silent, hardworking girl; she listened attentively when the clergyman read the Bible of an evening; the children were all very fond of her, but when they spoke of beauty, and dress, and finery, she shook her head.

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The next Sunday they went to church and asked Karen if she would come too, but she pointed to her crutches with tears in her eyes. So all the others went out to hear God's word, but she was left alone in her little room, which was only just large enough to hold a bed and a chair. There she knelt down and opened her prayer-book, and as she read with an earnest heart the wind brought in the sound of the organ from the church, and Karen lifted up her tearful face and said, "God help me!"

Then before her in the brilliant sunshine stood God's angel; the same who had stood at the church door in his long white robes. This time he bore no gleaming sword, but a spray of roses, and when he touched the ceiling with the flowers it rose high out of sight, and in its place shone a golden star. He touched the walls; they widened into space, and Karen saw the pealing organ, and the pictures on the church walls, and the people singing psalms before the altar. The church itself had come to the poor girl, or she had gone to it. She was sitting in the clergyman's pew, and at the end of the psalm the children looked up and whispered, "It was right for you to come, Karen."

"It was mercy," she said.

The organ sounded, and the children's voices in the choir rose clear and sweet. The sunlight poured through the window on to the place where Karen sat, and her heart grew so full of sunlight, peace, and joy that it broke; her soul flew on the golden rays to heaven; and there was no one there who asked about the red shoes.



The Silent Book.



LOSE by the forest-path stood a lonely farm-house; the road ran right through the farm-yard. Every window in the house was open; within all was bustle and confusion; without, the sun shone full on an open coffin, which had been carried out into the yard and placed under the deep shadow of a flowering elder tree. The dead man in the coffin was to be buried that very morning; no one shed a tear for him; his head, covered by a white cloth, rested on a large thick book, in which every leaf was made of blotting paper, and between each lay a withered flower; the book was a herbal, filled with specimens collected from different places, and it was to go down into the grave with its master. A chapter of the dead man's life was opened by each flower, and he had begged not to be separated from the book which held them.

"Who is the dead man?" we asked. "The old student," was the answer. "He was a smart lad once, they say: could read ancient tongues, sing, and write verses of his own making; but all on a sudden something made him turn all his thoughts to drinking brandy, and when his health was quite broken down, he came here into the country, and a friend paid for his board and lodging. He was as quiet as a child when he was not out of his sober senses; but when the savage mood came over him, he was really dangerous, and would run

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out into the forest like a madman. When we caught him and brought him here, we managed to put this old book in his way, and he would open it, and sit for days together looking first at one plant and then at another, while the tears rolled slowly down his cheeks. Heaven only knows what he was thinking of, but he begged to have the book laid in his coffin, and now



there he lies, and in a few minutes the lid will be screwed down, and he will rest quietly in his grave."

They lifted the cerecloth, and a sunbeam fell across the quiet face; a swallow darted under the leaves of the elder tree, paused, and circled round the dead man's head.

How sad and strange it is—we all know the feeling—to look through old letters, written or received long years ago! A new life rises up before us again, with all its hopes and fears. How many people who were

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then so much to us are dead to us now! They are alive still, but we have not thought of them for years, though once we fancied we should cling to them for ever, and share with them all joy and sorrow.

The withered oak-leaf in the book recalls the friend of school and college days; he placed it in the student's cap as they stood under the forest boughs, and swore a life-long friendship. Where is he now? The leaf is preserved, but the friendship lost for ever. Here is a foreign exotic, too fragile for this northern clime; the leaves still hold a ghost-like fragrance. *She* gave him that—the high-born girl in the castle gardens. Here is a rose he gathered himself, and wetted with salt tears. And here lies a nettle—what can that have to say? What were the man's thoughts as he gathered it? what as he preserved it? There is a spray of may from the forest solitudes; here an evergreen from the flower pot of the tap-room window sill, and here a bare grass blade.

The blooming elder bends slowly and tenderly over the dead man's face; the swallow circles round him—
"Tweet, tweet!"

Now come the men with nails and hammer; the lid is placed upon the coffin; the head rests peacefully upon the silent book; the life story is closed for this world.



The Little Match-girl.



NEW Year's eve was come, with bitter cold grey dusk and falling snow. Through the gathering darkness a little child, bare-headed and poorly clad, pattered down the frozen streets with naked feet. When she left home she had on a pair of shoes, but they were of no use to her, for they were so large that her mother had worn them, and the child could not keep them on her feet. She had lost them as she ran across the street in terror, to escape being run over by the carriages rolling quickly over the noiseless snow. One shoe was lost in the snow, the other was picked up by a street boy, who ran off with it. The child went on with naked feet, red and aching with the bitter cold. Her apron was filled with lucifer-matches, and she held a bundle of them in one hand; but no one had bought any the whole day through; not even a penny-worth.

Shivering with cold and hunger, the poor little thing looked the picture of misery.

Snowflakes hung on her long fair hair, but she did not heed them; bright lights shone from the windows, and from every house came the smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. That was what she was thinking of.

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In an angle formed by two houses, one of which stood rather in front of the other, she cowered down on the frozen ground; she drew her little feet under her, but it was freezing hard. Home she dared not go, for she had not sold a single match, and her father would beat her cruelly; besides, it was as cold at home: there was only the roof over them, and the keen wind whistled through even when the largest holes were stuffed with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost frozen. Ah! perhaps a match would warm her just a little, if she took one from the bundle, struck it against the wall, and tried to warm her fingers! She drew one out. P-r-r-r-r-r-r! how it fizzed and flamed. It was a bright warm light, like a little candle, as she held her hands over it: a wonderful light. It seemed to the child as if she were sitting in front of a bright fire, with polished brass fender and fire-irons: how the fire blazed and crackled—how the warmth came out towards her! She stretched out her little feet to warm them also, but in a second the match was out—the fire had vanished, and only the blackened end of the match was left in her hand.

She struck a second match against the wall; it flamed out and the wall grew as transparent as a veil. The child looked into the room and saw a table splendidly laid: rare porcelain dishes stood on the snow-white cloth, and a large roast goose smoked at the head of the table, with apple-sauce near it, and dried fruits. And what was better still, the goose hopped off the dish and came waddling along the floor to the little girl, with a knife and fork stuck right in its breast. It had almost reached her when the match went out, and left only the bare, damp wall behind. She lit another match;—and lo! she was sitting under a brilliant

THE LITTLE MATCH-GIRL.

Christmas-tree, taller and more beautiful than the one she had seen through the glass doors of the rich merchant's house. Myriads of tapers shone from the green branches, and bright pictures, such as she had seen in the shop windows, looked down upon her. The child stretched out her hands—but the match went out. The tapers rose higher and higher through the frozen air; at last they glimmered overhead like stars in the sky, and one fell, leaving as it went a long streak of fire.

"Some one is dying now," said the child, for her old grandmother, the only one who had ever been fond of her, and who was now dead herself, had told her that whenever a star shoots, a soul flies up to God.

The child struck another match, and in its light she saw her dead grandmother, glorious and radiant to look upon, and smiling tenderly in the child's upturned face.

"Grandmother!" cried the little one, "oh! take me with you. I know you will vanish when the match goes out; you will go away like the bright fire, and the goose, and the beautiful Christmas-tree!" She struck her whole bundle of matches quickly, for she wanted to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a brilliant flame that all around grew clear as day; her grandmother had never before looked so tall and beautiful: she lifted the child into her arms and both of them flew away radiant with happiness, far above the earth, higher and higher to the land where there is neither hunger, cold, nor sorrow—to the presence of God.

In the chill early dawn the little girl was found, cowering against the wall, frozen to death, on the happy New Year's Eve. A bright sunlight shone down on her face, tinged her pale cheeks with red, and kissed her smiling lips. Motionless she sat there holding her

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matches; one bundle of them was burnt away. "She must have tried to warm herself," they said. No one dreamed of all the beautiful things she had seen, or in what glorious light her grandmother had come to carry her away to her New Year's peace and joy.

The Jumpers.



HE flea, the grasshopper, and the skipjack wanted to see which of them could jump the farthest. They invited all the world and anybody else who liked to come and see the contest. They were all three first-rate jumpers.

"I will give my daughter to the one who jumps the highest," said the king, "for it would be very mean to let them jump for nothing."

The flea came first. He had very pretty manners, and bowed to every one present. He had noble blood in his veins, and was accustomed to have to do with human beings, and that always tells.

The grasshopper came next. He was certainly of heavier build, but he had a good figure, and wore the green uniform which he had received at his birth. Besides it was said that he was connected with a very high family in Egypt, and was well thought of in that country. He had come in from the fields, and been put into a house of cards, three stories high, and built entirely of

THE JUMPERS.

court cards with the faces turned inwards ; the mansion had both door and windows, all cut out of the Queen of Hearts.

"I have such a voice," said the grasshopper, "that sixteen native crickets who have sung from their infancy, and yet have never attained to a house of cards, fretted themselves thinner than they were before, from jealousy, when they heard me sing."

Both the flea and the grasshopper made known who they were, and maintained that they were worthy to obtain the princess.

The skipjack said not a word ; it was supposed that he thought the more ; but as he was only artificial, being made of a piece of bone with a little wax at one end, it was scarcely likely that he should be a great talker. The house dog sniffed round him, and found out in a moment that he was of good family, and made out of the breast bone of a genuine goose. The old Prime Minister, who had received three medals for silence, declared that the skipjack was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and that you could tell by his bones whether we were going to have a mild or a sharp winter ; and that is more than you can do even from the breast bone of the man who wrote the almanack.

"I will say nothing at present," said the old king ; "I take things easily, and hope for the best."

Then the jumping began. The flea jumped so high that no one could see him, and they declared that he had never jumped at all ! That was very mean.

The grasshopper jumped only half as high, but he jumped right into the king's face, and the king said that was impertinent.

The skipjack stood perfectly still, and considered ; at

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last, people began to think he was not going to jump at all.

"I hope he does not feel ill," said the dog, and poked him gently with his muzzle. Hop! off he was, and, with a little sideways spring, he lighted on the lap of the princess, who was sitting on a low golden stool.

Then the king said, "No one could possibly aim higher than that. The spring on to my daughter's lap was a very delicate compliment; that kind of thing requires brains, and the skipjack has shown that he has them."

So he received the princess in marriage.

"But I sprang the highest," said the flea. "Never mind! Let her have her morsel of goose bone and cobbler's wax. I sprang the highest, but in this world one must have a body as well as merit, or one cannot be seen."

Thereupon the flea enlisted in foreign service, and died abroad, so people say.

The grasshopper sat down by the ditch out of doors, and thought over the way in which things are managed here below. "Body—that's what's wanted! Body—that's what's wanted!" he remarked. And then he went on with his own melancholy song, and, listening to him, we learned the story,—but it may be all pure invention, even though you see it in print.



The Flying Trunk.



HERE was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street with silver, and perhaps a little alley into the bargain. He did not do so, however, because he had other ways of spending his money. He was such a good trader that if he spent a shilling, he always managed to get back a crown piece instead—till he died.

All this money came to his son, who led a merry life for a while. He went to a ball every night, made paper kites out of bank notes, and played at ducks and drakes with gold sovereigns instead of stones.

In such ways it is very easy for one's money to come to an end, and his money did. At last he had nothing left but four shillings, a pair of slippers, and an old dressing-gown. His friends cared nothing for him now; they could not even walk down the street in his company; but one of them, who was rather good-natured, sent him a large trunk with the words, "Pack up!" That was all very well, but he had nothing *to* pack up, so he got into the trunk himself.

Now this was a very remarkable trunk, for, as soon as the lock was pressed, it could fly. The young man closed the lock, and he was up the chimney, over the hills, and far away. He was terribly frightened at first whenever the trunk creaked, for if it had broken he

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would have had to turn a most prodigious somersault—only think of it! He flew on, however, till he reached the country where the Turks live. There he hid the trunk under heaps of dry leaves in a forest, and went into the city. There was no objection to his doing so, because all the Turks walk about in dressing-gown and slippers, just as he did. In the streets he met a nurse carrying a little child. "I say! you Turkish nurse," he said, "what is that great castle yonder, close to the town, where the windows are placed so high?"

"The sultan's daughter lives there," said the nurse; "it has been prophesied that she will be very unhappy in her choice of a lover, so that no one is allowed to see her, except when the sultan and sultana are present."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son. Then he walked back to the wood, got inside the trunk, flew on to the roof of the castle, and crept through the window into the princess's room.

She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she looked so pretty that the merchant's son was obliged to kiss her. The princess woke immediately and was terribly frightened, till her visitor told her that he was the god of the Turks who had flown down through the air to come to her; and then, of course, she was highly delighted.

They sat down side by side, and he told her stories about her eyes, calling them dark, lovely lakes in which the thoughts swam to and fro like mermaids; and then he spoke of her forehead, and said it was a mountain of snow, white and radiant. He told very pretty stories; and then he proposed to the princess, who said yes in a moment.

"You must be sure and come on Saturday, when the sultan and sultana drink tea with me," she said. "They will be very proud of my marriage with the god of the

THE FLYING TRUNK.

Turks. Mind you have a pretty story ready to tell them. My mother likes something with a moral, and rather high-flown ; but my father likes something that makes him laugh."

"Very well : I shall bring no other dowry than a story," he said ; and so they parted. The princess gave him a sabre studded with precious stones, and that was of great use to him, for he flew away and bought a new dressing-gown at once ; after which he sat down in the wood to prepare the story : it was to be ready by Saturday, and that was no easy matter.

When it was finished, it *was* Saturday.

The sultan, the sultana, and the whole court were at tea with the princess, and received him very graciously.

"Will you relate a story ?" said the sultana ; "something instructive and profound."

"But amusing and laughable," said the sultan.

"Oh, certainly," he replied, and began at once. Now pay attention.

There was once a bundle of lucifer-matches who were very fond of their high origin. The founder of their family, the famous old pine tree of which each of them was a little chip, had stood for years in a mighty forest. The matches were lying between a tinder-box and an old iron pot, and were telling stories of their young days. "Yes, when we were under the greenwood tree," they cried—"and we really *were* under the greenwood tree—then we used to have diamond tea, or dew, as people call it, every morning and every evening. We had sunshine all day long when the sun shone ; and the little birds were obliged to tell us stories. It was easy to see that we were extremely rich, because while the great majority of trees only dressed in summer, we always

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could afford to wear green all the year round. But when the wood-cutter—the great revolution that is—came, our family was broken up. Our ancestor received a position as mainmast on a magnificent ship which could sail all round the world if it chose to do so; the other branches were dispersed about, and we have the task of enlightening the vulgar crowd. That is the reason that people of our class are found in the kitchen."

"My fate was differently ordered," said the iron pot. "From the moment I came into the world I have been busy with scouring and cooking. I am thoroughly practical, and have been longest in the house. My sole relaxation is to join in rational conversation with my companions, when I have been scoured bright and clean and put in my place on the shelf after dinner. For—if I except the market-basket, who occasionally goes out into the world—we all live retired between these four walls. The market-basket is our only news-bringer; and he speaks in a most alarming manner of the Government and the people; indeed, I knew an aged pot who, as she was listening to him the other day, fell down in a fright and broke to pieces. He is a radical, I can tell you that much."

"You are talking too fast," said the tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint so that the sparks flew out. "Now, shall we not try and pass a pleasant evening together?"

"Yes; let us decide who is the grandest," said the matches.

"No; I do not like talking about myself," replied the pot. "Let us arrange an evening's entertainment. I will begin by telling a story founded on fact; such a one as we have all experienced: then we can easily throw ourselves into it, and receive a great deal of enjoyment

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from it. On the Baltic, by the Danish shore"—
"What a pretty beginning!" cried all the plates: "that is the kind of story we like."

"Yes—there my youth was passed in a quiet family. The furniture was polished, the floors scoured, and clean curtains were put up every fortnight."

"How charmingly you relate the story!" said the broom. "One can tell in a moment that one is listening to a man who has been much in female society: there is such a pure tone throughout."

"Yes, one feels that deeply," exclaimed the bucket, with a little leap of joy, which made the water splash on to the floor.

The pot continued, and the end was just as good as the beginning.

The plates rattled for joy, and the broom took up some green parsley out of the dust-hole and crowned the pot, for she knew it would vex the others. "If I crown him to-day, he will crown me to-morrow," she thought.

"Now I will dance," cried the tongs. Mercy on us! how she did stand on one leg! The old chair-cover in the corner split at the sight. "Shall I be crowned?" asked the tongs: and crowned she was.

"These are all common people!" said the matches.

The tea-urn was then asked to sing; but she said she had a slight cold and could not sing unless she boiled. That, however, was mere affectation; the truth was, she would not sing unless she was in the drawing-room with the master and mistress.

In the window lay an old quill pen with which the servant used to write; there was nothing remarkable about her, except that she had been dipped too deeply in the ink, but that was just what she was proud of.

"If the urn won't sing," she cried, "she can leave it

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alone. There is a nightingale in a cage outside who can sing: she has never learned, it is true, but we will excuse that for this evening."

"I consider it extremely improper," said the tea-kettle—he was a kitchen singer, and half-brother to the urn—"that such a foreign bird should be heard. Is that patriotic? Let the market-basket decide!"

"I am extremely annoyed," said the market-basket. "I am more annoyed in my own mind than I can express! Is this a fitting way to spend the evening? Would it not be far more sensible to set the house to rights, and put every one in his proper place? Come! I will lead the game, and that will be quite another thing."

"Yes, let us act charades," they all cried. The door opened, and in came the servant girl. Not a single thing moved. All were still. But there was not a pot among them who did not feel what he could have done and how grand he was. "Yes, if I had chosen," they all thought, "we should have spent a very pleasant evening."

The servant took up the matches and began to light the fire with them. Heavens! how they fizzed and blazed!

"Any one can see now that we are the grandest," they cried. "What brilliance we shed around! What lustre!" And with that they were burnt out.

"That was a delightful story," cried the sultana. "I feel myself quite carried away into the kitchen among the matches. Yes! you shall marry our daughter."

"So you shall; you shall marry her on Monday," exclaimed the sultan; and from that time they treated the young man as one of the family.

THE FLYING TRUNK.

The night before the wedding the whole city was illuminated. Gingerbread and biscuits were thrown among the people ; the street-boys stood on tiptoe, cried hurrah ! and whistled through their fingers. It was extremely splendid !

"Now, I suppose I must give them some kind of a treat," said the merchant's son. Whereupon he bought a quantity of rockets, crackers, and every imaginable sort of fireworks, placed them in his trunk, and flew up in the air.

P-r-r-r-r ! how they whirled, and fizzed, and blazed out on all sides !

The Turks jumped up in the air till their slippers flew past their ears ; they had never seen such a glitter and show before. Now they understood clearly that their princess was going to marry a god.

As soon as the merchant's son had finished his display of fireworks, he alighted in the wood, hid the trunk, and went into the town to hear how the exhibition had gone off ; it was quite natural that he should wish to know.

What things the people said to be sure ! Every one whom he questioned had seen something different from his neighbours, but they all agreed it had been a very beautiful sight.

"I saw the bridegroom myself !" said one of them ; "his eyes were like golden stars, and his beard like foaming water."

"He flew away in a mantle of fire," cried another ; "lovely angel-faces gleamed forth from its folds."

In short, he heard wonderful things ; and the next day was his wedding day.

He hastened back to the wood to get inside the trunk—but where *was* the trunk ? It was burnt up. A spark

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from the fireworks was left behind, the trunk had caught fire and was burnt to ashes! He could not fly any more—he could never reach his bride!

She stood waiting on the roof all day long; most likely she is waiting there now. He, meanwhile, is wandering about the world telling stories; but none of them are so amusing as the one he told about the matches.

A Story.



ALL the apple trees in the garden were in full bloom; they had made haste to cover themselves with blossom, even before the green leaves came. The ducklings waddled to and fro in the farmyard, the cat sat basking in the warmth and licked the sunshine from her paws. If you looked across the fields you saw the standing corn in its tender, delicate green; the birds were twittering and warbling overhead, as if they knew it was a festival.

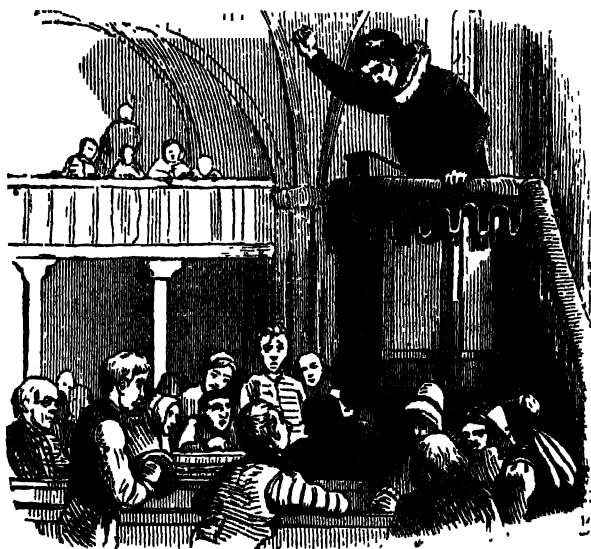
It was Sunday morning: the church bells were ringing, and the country folk, dressed in their best, wended their way to church with happy faces. Everything looked its best and brightest; it was a day so warm and blessed that one felt moved to say our Father loves to dwell among His children.

But inside the church the preacher stood in the pulpit

A STORY.

and spoke with harsh and angry voice. He said that all men were godless, and that therefore God would punish them : that after death the wicked would burn in hell-fire for ever.

It was terrible to hear, and he spoke of it with firm conviction : he described hell as a pestilential cavern into which flows all the corruption of the world—where there is no air to breathe but sulphurous fumes, where



the wicked sink deeper and ever deeper in eternal silence. It was indeed frightful to hear him, and the people in the church were pale with horror. Outside the birds were singing joyously, the sun shone bright and warm, and every flower seemed to say, "Oh, God, Thou art good!"

Out of doors, it did not look like the preacher's sermon.

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On going to rest that night the Pastor looked at his wife's sad, thoughtful face. "What ails thee?" he said to her.

"Ah, what ails me?" she cried. "I cannot collect my thoughts; I cannot grasp what you told us in church to-day, that there are so many godless men, and that they must burn in hell for ever. For ever? ah, how long that is! I am but a human being—a poor sinner in the sight of God, and yet I could not find it in my heart to let even the most hardened wretch suffer for ever. How, then, can He, who is infinite love, and who knows how evil attacks us from within and from without? I cannot believe it, even though you say it."

Autumn came; the trees lost their leaves; the harsh, stern preacher sat by his wife's deathbed and watched the humble, contrite soul pass away.

"If any child of man can find rest in death and mercy before her God, thou canst," said the preacher. He folded her hands, and read the psalms for the dead.

They bore her to her grave: a few tears rolled slowly down her husband's sunken cheeks; in the parsonage house all was silence and desolation; the light of the house was quenched—gone to the everlasting home.

It was the dead of night: a cold wind stirred the preacher's hair; he opened his eyes, and it seemed to him as if the moonlight filled his room, but the moon was not shining. A radiant form stood beside him—the spirit of his dead wife; she looked at him sorrowfully, and seemed as if she wished to speak to him.

The preacher rose up in his bed and stretched out his arms—"No rest even for thee?" he cried; "the best and humblest!"

The figure laid her hand upon her heart and shook her head.

A STORY.

"And can I help you to your rest?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"How then?"

"Give me a single hair from the head of any sinner whom God will condemn to everlasting torment."

"Is your release to be obtained so easily as that?" he asked.

"Follow me!" said the spirit—"you are permitted to do so. Our way lies wherever your thoughts will lead us: invisibly we shall penetrate in the inmost recesses of men's hearts. But with unfaltering voice must you pronounce the name of him who is sentenced to eternal pain, and he must be found before the cock crowing."

Swiftly, borne by their winged thoughts, they found themselves in the great city; from the walls and houses flamed out, in letters of fire, the names of the seven deadly sins—the whole seven-hued rainbow of evil.

"Yes, within there, as I thought—as I knew," said the Pastor, "they dwell who shall be a prey to the eternal flame." They stood before the brilliantly-lighted mansion; the staircase was half hidden by rare flowers, from above came the sound of dance music; footmen in liveries of silk and velvet lined the entrance hall. "Our ball can vie with the king's," said one of the insolent lacqueys. His scornful glance fell on the gaping crowd in the street, and his thoughts were printed on his face. "What is this ragged crowd, in comparison to me, but dregs and scum?"

"Pride!" said the spirit; "do you not see?"

"See him?" replied the preacher. "He is but a poor ignorant fool: the eternal fires are not for him."

"Only a fool," resounded through the house of pride—it was the sentence passed on all within.

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They passed on to the miser's four bare walls. Worn to a skeleton, hungry, shivering with cold, the old man cleaves, with heart and soul, to his treasure. They saw him start in feverish haste from his bed, take a loose stone out of the wall, where lay an old stocking heavy with gold; saw him feel his ragged coat where the gold coins had been sewn in, and marked how his damp fingers shook. "He is ill," cried the preacher. "His sin is madness—a joyless madness girt round with anguish and evil dreams."

They passed on to the cells of the criminals; who lay in long rows, sleeping side by side. Like a wild beast, one of them started from his sleep with a terrible cry—he struck out wildly at his companion, who turned in sleepy anger. "Hold your peace, monster," he cried, "every night it is the same."

"Every night!" shrieked the other; "every night he comes to torment me. In my passion I have done this and that. Born with base and evil tendencies, I have sinned, and I suffer. One thing I have not yet confessed. When I left this place, the last time, and passed by my former master's house I thought of old wrongs till my passion flamed up within me. I struck a lucifer-match against the wall; it may have been too near the thatch. Everything was burned down. The heat scorched me—scorches me now. I myself helped to save the cattle and furniture. No living thing was burned, except a flock of pigeons who flew into the flame, and the yard dog. I had forgotten him. His howls were heard through the flame, and I hear them every night when I try to sleep; and if I do sleep, he comes to me in my dreams, flies at me, howls, tears and torments me. Listen, fellow, while I speak! You can snore the whole night through—there is no sleep for

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me ! " and, with bloodshot eyes, he clenched his fist and struck his comrade in the face.

"The madman has broken out again," cried a dozen voices ; * savagely the others set upon him, struck and wrestled with him, and at last secured him with thongs, tied so tightly that they drew blood.

"You are killing the unhappy creature !" exclaimed the preacher, stretching out his hand in protection over the tortured criminal, who was suffering the penalty of his sin. At the pitying gesture the scene changed. They passed swiftly through luxurious halls and wretched hovels ; envy, self-worship, every mortal sin passed by them. An angel of judgment read their accusation and their defence. The defence was but a poor one, but it was read to Him who knows all—all the temptations from within and from without—Him, who is very Love. The preacher's hand trembled ; he dared not stretch it out : he ventured not to pluck a hair from the head of any. Tears rushed from his eyes, like streams of pity and mercy, whose cooling waters quench the fires of hell.

The cock crowed.

"Merciful God !" cried the preacher, "give *Thou* peace to her spirit. I cannot set her free."

"Peace is granted to me now," said a gentle voice. "It was thy harsh words, thy despair of human kind, thy gloomy thoughts of God and His creation that brought me to thee. Learn to know thy fellowmen, and to see even in the worst of them a trace of that divine Spirit Who quenches and conquers hell."

The preacher felt a kiss upon his lips ; a light shone round him ; God's golden sunshine poured into the room ; and his wife, living, gentle, and loving, woke him from a dream which had been sent to him by God.

The Old Street Lamp.



AVE you ever heard the story of the old street lamp? It is not particularly amusing; but it can be listened to for all that. There was once an honest old street lamp who had been engaged in the public service for many years, and was now about to be pensioned off. She was burning for the last time at the top of her post, and lighting up the whole street.

It seemed to her that she was like an elderly ballet-dancer, dancing for the last time, and on the morrow destined to sit forgotten in her garret. That *to-morrow* woke many an anxious thought in the old lamp; for, first of all, she would have to appear for the first time at the town hall and be inspected by the mayor and corporation, that they might see whether or no she was fit for further service.

It would then be decided whether she should be transferred to a suburb to enlighten the folk who lived there, or be sent to a factory, or despatched without more delay to an iron foundry to be recast. In the latter case she might be made into a thousand things, but the doubt as to whether she should lose all memory of ever having been a street lamp troubled her dreadfully. Whatever

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might befall her, one thing seemed certain, and that was that she would be separated from the night watchman and his wife, whom she had always considered as belonging to her own family. When the lamp was first lighted in the street, the watchman had been just appointed to his office; he was an active young man then. Yes! that was many years ago since he became a watchman and she a street lamp. His wife was rather high at first, she would not vouchsafe to cast a glance on the lamp except at night—never in the daytime! But latterly, when they were all three growing old together, she had attended to the lamp herself, rubbing and polishing and pouring in the oil. The two old people were thoroughly honest: they had never cheated the lamp out of a drop of her oil.

This was her last evening in the street, and to-morrow she was to appear at the town hall. These were two gloomy thoughts. No wonder that she did not shine very bright. Many other thoughts, too, passed through her mind. She had lent her light to many people, and seen many things; perhaps she had seen as much as the mayor and corporation. But she did not say this aloud, for she was a well-disposed, good sort of a lamp, and would not say a disparaging word against any one—certainly not against the Government. She was full of thoughts, and her flame flickered uneasily. At such moments she imagined that she could not be quite forgotten. For instance, there was that handsome young man—a long time ago that was, certainly—he held in his hand a note written on pink paper with gilt edges; the writing was written in a delicate lady's hand. He read it twice, kissed it, and looked up to the lamp with eyes that plainly said, "I am the happiest man in the world!" Only he and the lamp knew what was written

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in this first letter from his lady-love. Yes; and the lamp remembered another pair of eyes. It is really wonderful how one's thoughts dart from one thing to another! A funeral was passing down the street, a beautiful young face was resting on the flower-bestrewn bier; rows of lighted tapers made the lamp's flame look dim. Crowds of people formed in procession on the pavement and slowly followed the coffin: but when the shine of the torches had passed away from the dazzled lamp, one man was left behind, leaning against the post, bitterly weeping. These, and such-like memories haunted the old lamp as she shone for the last time.

The sentry relieved from duty knows at least who his successor will be, and can whisper to him a few words of useful information: the old street lamp knew nothing of hers, and yet she could have given him most valuable hints as to the fog and rain, telling him, for instance, how far the moonlight came along the pavement, which side the wind generally blew from, and similar particulars.

Meanwhile three persons who were lying in the gutter were each wishing to represent the old lamp, who, as they knew, would soon be obliged to retire. The first was a herring's head which could shine in the darkness, after a fashion; and thought it would be a great saving of oil if he were placed on the lamp-post. Number two was a piece of rotten wood, which could also shine a little, and considered itself to be descended from one of the monarchs of the forest. Number three was a glow-worm; the lamp could not make out how it had got there, but there it was, and it too could shine. The rotten wood and the herring's head swore, by all that was holy, that it could only shine at certain times, and therefore was quite out of the running.

The old lamp said that neither of them gave sufficient

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light to fill the office of street-lamp: but they did not believe her. As soon as they understood that the situation was not in the gift of the lamp herself, they thought that explained all; she was too infirm to be entrusted with the appointment.

Just at that moment the wind came up round the street corner and blew through the ventilators of the old lamp. "What do I hear?" it cried. "You are going away to-morrow? This is the last time we shall meet? Then I must give you a parting gift. I will blow into the chambers of your brain so that you shall not only retain the memory of past words and scenes, but that all shall be so clear within you that you shall be able to see all you hear read or talked of in your presence."

"Oh, that is a splendid gift!" cried the old lamp. "I thank you from my heart. So that I am not recast, I do not mind. Shall I retain my memory even in that case?"

"My dear old lamp, be reasonable," said the wind, with a puff.

As he spoke the moon appeared from behind a cloud. "What are you going to give to the lamp?" said the wind.

"Nothing," said the moon; "I am on the wane, and the street lamps have never enlightened me—quite the contrary." And with these words the moon disappeared again immediately, so as to be relieved from further importunities.

Suddenly a drop fell on the lamp from the grey cloud overhead. "The cloud has sent me as a present," said the drop; "perhaps you will one day think me the most valuable of all. I shall penetrate your whole frame, so that at any moment when you wish it you may be eaten up with rust, and fall into ashes."

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The lamp did not think that was a nice present, and the wind was of her opinion too. "Will no one give anything else?" he blew as loud as he could.

A shooting-star dashed past them, leaving behind a momentary line of fire.

"What was that?" cried the herring's head. "Was it not a shooting-star? I verily believe it shot right into the lamp! Certainly, if people of such a position as that care to apply for the place, we may as well say good-night and go home."

So they all three went home. But the old lamp shed round a beautiful golden light. "That was a glorious present," she said. "The dear, lovely stars, who have always been my greatest joy, and who shine as I can never shine, though I strive and try after it always, have thought of the old lamp, and sent a present which gives me the power of bringing before me all that I have seen, or that I hear, but of being seen by all I love. And that is true happiness, for what is joy which one cannot share with others?"

"The remark does honour to your disposition," cried the wind. "But for that, wax tapers are necessary. If wax tapers are not lighted within you, your rare gifts will not profit other people. The stars never thought of that; they take you and every kind of light for wax tapers. But I will go down now." And he went down.

"Wax tapers, indeed!" cried the old lamp. "Never have I had such things, and I fear I never shall have as long as I live——If only I can escape being recast!"

The next day—well, we had better pass over the next day! The next night the street lamp rested in an old high-backed arm-chair. And guess where? Why, at the old night watchman's! He had begged,

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as a favour from the Corporation, that, in consideration of his long and faithful services, they would allow him to keep the lamp which he had put up four-and-twenty years ago, on his first day of office as a watchman. He looked upon it as his child; he had no other; and the lamp was made over to him.

There she lay in the old chair by the stove; it seemed as if she had grown bigger, for she filled up the whole chair.

The old couple sat at supper, and cast many a kindly glance at the street lamp; they would not have grudged her a place at table.

Their room was certainly an underground one; you were obliged to go down some stone steps to reach it, but when once you were inside everything looked warm and comfortable. Bands of list were nailed on the door to keep out the draught; everything was clean and neat; white curtains hung round the bed and before the window. On the window sill stood two curious flower-pots which neighbour Christian, the sailor, had brought from the East or West Indies. They were made of clay, and were in the shape of elephants, only they had no backs, so that they could be filled with earth. One was planted with garlic, that was the kitchen garden; out of the other grew a pretty geranium tree, that was the flower garden. Against the wall hung a coloured print of the Congress of Vienna. There you had all the emperors and kings together. Near to that a clock, with heavy leaden weights, went "tic-tac," and it was always fast; that was much better, the old people used to say, than if it had been slow. They sat eating their supper; and the old lamp lay, as I have already mentioned, in the arm chair close to the stove. It seemed to her that the whole world was upside down.

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But when the old watchman looked at her, and talked over all they had gone through together in rain and mist, in clear, short summer nights, and in the long winter darkness, amid the whirling snow, so that she longed for the warm room—then the old lamp felt as if the world had come right again. She saw it all as clearly as if it were happening at the moment: the wind had given her a famous light.

The two old folks were very active and industrious; not an hour was wasted. On Sunday afternoons, a book of some kind, generally a book of travels, was brought out, and the old man would read aloud. He read of the vast African forests, where the wild elephants wander at will: his wife listened eagerly and cast furtive glances at the two elephants which did duty for flower pots. "I can almost picture it to myself," said the old woman: and the street-lamp wished with all her heart that they would put a wax taper within her, for then the old woman would have been able to see it all, even the very smallest details, as the lamp herself saw it:—the tall trees, with their interlacing branches, the naked savages on horseback, and the troops of elephants treading down the jungle with their broad, heavy feet.

"What is the use of all my powers without a wax light?" cried the street-lamp; "there is only oil and tallow here, and they are of no use."

One day a whole heap of wax-taper ends made their way into the little room; the larger pieces were burnt, and the smaller were used by the old woman to wind her thread upon. So there were wax lights in plenty, but it never occurred to any one to put a piece in the old lamp.

"Here I am with my rare gifts," said the street-lamp. "I see it all in my own mind, and yet I can impart

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nothing to others; they know not that I can transform the white walls into rich tapestries, or mighty forests, or anything else that they can desire. The lamp was always kept neat and clean, and set up in a corner where all the world could see her. Strangers said it was nothing but old lumber; but the old folk did not mind about that, they liked the old lamp.

One day—it was the watchman's birthday—the old woman stood over the lamp smiling softly to herself. "I shall light up in honour of my old man to-night," she said. And the lamp rattled her lead-rimmed squares, for she said, "Now at last I shall have a light!" But it was only oil after all—no wax-light was even thought of. She burned the whole evening through, but she saw only too well that the gift of the shooting-star would be useless for this life. Then she had a dream; now it was nothing wonderful for one of her capabilities to be able to dream. It seemed to her that the two old people were dead, and that she herself had been sent to the iron-foundry to be recast. She was just as frightened and uneasy as when she stood before the Mayor and Corporation in the Town Hall. But although she had the power of crumbling into ashes, she did not use it. She was thrown into the smelting furnace, and recast as a candelabra, as beautiful as one could imagine, and made just on purpose to hold wax-tapers. It was in the shape of an angel, holding a bouquet, and the wax-lights stood in the centre of the bouquet. The candelabra was placed on a green writing table; the room was very beautiful, books lay all around, the walls were hung with splendid pictures, it was the room of a poet. Everything of which he wrote was imaged around him; the scene changed into gloomy woods, or sunny meadows where the stork wandered to and fro; to the

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deck of a ship on the restless sea, or the clear heavens with its myriad stars.

"What capacities lie hidden within me," cried the old street-lamp, as she awoke. "I could almost wish to be recast! But no; that must not happen so long as the old folks are living: they love me for myself as I am; they have kept me clean and filled with oil. I am as well cared for as the whole congress yonder, and they are fond of that, too."

From that time the good old lamp enjoyed more inward peace, as she richly deserved to do.

The Metal Pig.



IN the city of Florence, not far from the Piazza del Granduca, is a little by-lane called, I think, Porta Rosa. There, before a kind of vegetable market, stands an artistically formed metal pig! Fresh, clean water flows from its mouth; it has become of a greenish-black colour from sheer old age, but the snout still shines as if it were polished daily, as indeed it is by hundreds of children and

lazzaroni, who seize it with their hands, and place their mouths close to the metal, so that they can drink from

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it. It is a perfect picture to see the animal bestriden by a handsome half-naked lad, who lays his fresh lips close to the brazen snout.

Any one who visits Florence can easily find the place ; he has but to ask the first beggar he meets for the metal pig.

It was late on a winter's night ; the mountains were covered with snow, but the moon was shining : and the Italian moonlight gives as bright a light as the light of our dim northern winter day—nay, better, for there the air cheers and revives us, while in the north the cold, grey, leaden clouds press us down to earth, to the cold, wet earth which soon shall press down our coffin-lid.

In the grand duke's castle gardens, under an arched roof of pines, where a thousand roses blossom all the winter through, a little, ragged boy had been sitting the whole day long ; a boy who might have sat for a picture of Italy herself—fair, smiling, and yet suffering.

He was hungry and thirsty, but no one gave him either food or drink ; and when the hour came for closing the gardens, the gate-keeper drove him out. He stood for a long while, dreaming idly on the bridge, and watching the golden stars which glimmered in the Arno beneath, as it flowed on towards the splendid marble bridge Della Trinità.

He wended his way to the metal pig, knelt down, wound his arms round the rugged neck, placed his lips to the polished snout, and drank the water in long draughts. Close at hand lay a few lettuce leaves, and one or two chestnuts, and that was the child's supper. No one else was in the street, it belonged to him alone, and he climbed on to the back of the pig, bent forward till his curly head rested on the creature's neck, and before he was conscious of fatigue, he was sound asleep.

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At midnight the metal pig stirred; he heard it say distinctly, "Hold fast, little boy, I am going to run;" and off it went with him, a wonderful ride. First of all they made for the Piazza del Granduca, and the bronze horse, which carries the duke's statue, neighed aloud, the painted coat of arms on the court of justice shone like living pictures, Michael Angelo's David swung his deadly sling, a strange life stirred on every side. The groups of Perseus, and the Sabines started to sudden



consciousness, a cry of anguish broke from the women's lips and echoed far and wide across the square.

In the Colonnade before the Palazzo degli Uffizzi, where the nobles keep high carnival, the metal pig stood still.

"Hold fast," said the pig, "hold fast. I am going upstairs now." The child did not speak, he was trembling, half in terror, half in joy.

They passed through a long gallery; the boy had

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often 'been here before; the walls were hidden by splendid paintings; statues and busts stood all around, and the light was as clear as in the brightest noon-day. It was most beautiful of all when a side door opened; the child remembered that also, but now all the beauty was seen in its fairest light. Here stood a lovely, marble woman, beautiful as only the great master of marble could mould: her fair limbs moved, dolphins flocked to her feet, immortality shone from her clear eyes. The world knows her as the Medicean Venus. By her side stood marble figures, where the soul has thrilled through the stone—handsome, naked men, one of whom is whetting his sword, gladiators wrestling in deadly combat; the sword was whetted, the battle fought for the goddess of beauty.

The child was dazzled by the splendour; the walls glowed with colour, all was life and movement. The statue of Venus seemed doubled—the earthly Venus rose, yielding and passionate as when Titian clasped her to his heart; it was wonderful to see. They were two fair women, their lovely, unveiled limbs were stretched on soft cushions, their breasts heaved, their heads moved so that the heavy masses of hair fell over their low shoulders, while their dark eyes spoke out the thoughts of their beating hearts. None of the pictures dared to come quite out of the frames; the goddess of beauty herself, the gladiators and the sword-whetter remained in their places; for the glory which streamed down from the pictures of the Virgin and the saints held them spell-bound.

What lustre and beauty met them in every room! The child saw it all: the metal pig walked slowly through the ever-changing loveliness. One sight drove out another; but at last came a picture which printed

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itself deeply in the child's heart, and chiefly because of the happy children's faces on it. He had seen it once by daylight—many pass it heedlessly by, and yet it contains a whole treasure of poesy. It is the descent of Christ into hell—they are not the condemned who throng around him, but groups of heathen. The Florentine Angelo Bronzino has painted the picture. The loveliest thing in the picture is the expression of the children's faces; the full confidence that they shall be taken to heaven. Two of them embrace each other already—one little lad stretches out his hand to another and points to himself, as if to say, "I am going to heaven!" The elder folk stand in uncertain hope, or bow themselves in humble adoration before the Lord Jesus. The glance of the child rested longest of all on this picture, the metal pig stood still before it; a faint sigh was heard, did it come from the animal or from the canvas? The lad stretched out his arms to the smiling children, but the pig ran away with him through the open doorway. "Thanks to thee, dear, kind pig!" said the child, as they hastily ran down the staircase.

"And thanks to thee, as well," answered the metal pig; "we have helped each other, for it is only when I have an innocent child on my back that I receive the power of running. See! I may even pass under the light that falls from the lamp below the picture of the Virgin—but I may not enter the church. When you are on my back, indeed, I may look in from without. Do not get off, or I shall lie dead as you see me in the Porta Rosa."

"I will stay with you," said the little one; and on they hurried through the streets of Florence till they came to the square before the Church of Santa Croce.

The doors opened wide, lights gleamed from the altar

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through the church and streamed across the lonely piazza.

A wondrous radiance gleamed from a grave in the left aisle; thousands of glancing stars shone round it like a glory. A coat-of-arms glows on the stone—a ladder on a blue ground that burns like fire—it is Galileo's grave. The monument is simple, but the burning ladder on the blue ground is full of meaning. It speaks of art, which raises its glowing ladder to the heavens, so that its prophets are caught up, like Elijah, to the skies.

In the right aisle the columns of the rich sarcophagus seem instinct with life. Here stood Michael Angelo, yonder Dante, wearing his laurel crown, Alfieri, Macchiavelli—the great men who form the pride and boast of Italy.* It is a splendid church, smaller, but far lovelier than the marble cathedral.

It seemed as if the marble drapery stirred, the noble figures raised their heads and looked towards the glittering altar, where, amid soaring bursts of music, white-robed boys swung their golden censers—the heavy fragrance streamed from the church out into the open square.

The boy stretched out his hand towards the glory, and in a moment the metal pig hurried him away; he was obliged to hold firmly to its neck, the wind whistled past his ears, the church doors creaked on their hinges as they swung to, for a moment the child seemed to

* Michael Angelo's tomb stands opposite Galileo's. On the monument three figures are grouped round his bust: Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Dante's monument is next to this, though the poet's body lies at Ravenna; on his monument Italy, as Poesy, weeps for her lost poet. A few steps farther is the tomb of Alfieri, on which are carved laurel, lyre, and masks, with Italy weeping above the coffin. The line of distinguished men is closed by Macchiavelli.

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lose consciousness, he felt an icy chill, and opened his eyes.

It was daylight ; he sat, half falling from the back of the pig, which stood, where it had ever stood, in the street of Porta Rosa.

Fear and dread filled the child's heart at the thought of her whom he called his mother. She had sent him out yesterday to beg, and he had received nothing ; he was hungry and thirsty. Once more he embraced the metal pig, kissed it, and nodded to it a farewell. Then, wending his way along a narrow lane, hardly wide enough to admit a donkey carrying its pack saddle, he came to an iron-bound door. A dirty staircase, with a rope for banisters, led him to an open corridor hung with rags ; another staircase led him down into a courtyard, where, from a well in the centre, iron pipes were carried up to the houses, and one bucket hung by another ; the chains creaked, the buckets rose and fell, the water splashed in the courtyard. Another crumbling staircase led upwards. Two Russian sailors came clattering down the steps at such a headlong rate that they almost overturned the poor lad. They were returning from their nightly bacchanal ; a black-haired woman, not young, but handsome, followed them. "What have you brought ?" she cried out to the child.

"Don't be angry," he pleaded—"they gave me nothing, nothing at all ;" and he seized his mother's dress as if to kiss it. They entered the squalid room ; I will not describe it, further than to say that in it one saw the inevitable *marito*, or chafing dish with handles, which the Italians carry about with them, to warm themselves at its charcoal embers. The woman took up the *marito*, thrust aside the boy with her elbow and said, "Come, you have brought some money."

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The lad began to cry : she kicked him roughly, and he sobbed aloud.

" Be still, or I will break your noisy head ! " she cried, swinging the chafing dish ; the child threw himself on the ground, with a shrill cry of fear. His voice brought one of the neighbours into the room, a woman, holding her *marito* in her hands.

" What are you doing to the boy, Felicita ? " she cried.

" The child is mine," answered Felicita. " I can murder him if I like, and you into the bargain, Giannina." She lifted her *marito*, Giannina raised hers too, in self-defence ; the two clay dishes swung together so violently that they broke to pieces, and a shower of glowing embers, ashes, and fiery dust filled the room. In the confusion the child escaped from the room : he ran through the courtyard and out into the street, until he could not breathe. Before him stood the great church whose doors had opened to him on the previous night ; he went in, and, kneeling on the first grave he came to—it was Michael Angelo's—he sobbed aloud. The church was gloriously beautiful : mass was being sung—people went and came, and no one noticed the child. Only one elderly man paused for a moment, glanced at him, and then went away like the others.

The child was faint from hunger : he crept into a corner between the marble monuments and fell asleep. Towards evening he was awake by a pull at his garments, he started up, and the same old man was standing before him.

" Are you ill ? Where do you live ? Have you been here all day ? " asked the old man. The child answered the string of questions, and the old man took him to his little house, which was in a side street near at hand. They entered into a glove-maker's workshop, where a

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woman sat busily sewing; a little white poodle, shorn so closely that one could see the pink colour of his skin, was leaping about on the table and sat up before the child in greeting.

"Innocent creatures find each other out," said the woman, caressing both dog and child.

They gave the boy food and drink, and told him he might spend the night with them, and that on the next



day Guiseppe, the old glove-maker, would speak with his mother. They gave him a little bed, poor and mean indeed—but for him who had slept so often on hard, cold steps, it was royally splendid: he slept sweetly, dreaming of the lovely pictures and the metal pig.

Guiseppe went out the next morning; the child was sad to see him go, for he knew that the result would be that he would be taken back to his mother. He kissed the merry little dog, and nodded to them both.

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What news did old Guiseppe bring back with him? He spoke for a long while with his wife, who nodded and stroked the child. "He is a lovely boy," she said; "he will make as famous a 'prentice as you did. See how pliant and delicate his fingers are! Madonna has surely destined him to be a glove-maker."

The child stayed on in the house, and the woman taught him to sew; he ate well, slept well, learned how to play, and began to tease *Bellissima*, the little dog.

Then the woman would scold and threaten him, and the child would take it to heart and sit sorrowfully in his lonely chamber. The room looked on the street where skins were hung out to dry; thick iron bars protected every window; the boy could not sleep, the metal pig was always in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard outside the house "Pit-pat." It was certainly the pig—he sprang to the window, but it had gone by.

"Help the gentleman to carry his colour-box," said Madame to the child, one morning, as the young painter, their neighbour, stepped by with a large roll of canvas under his arm. The boy picked up the box and followed the painter; they set out towards the gallery, and went up the stairs which were so familiar to him now, ever since his ride on the metal pig. He recognized the groups of statues, the marble Venus and her who lived in colour, he saw once more the Virgin, and Saint John.

They paused once more before Bronzino's picture; the lovely children smiled in expectation of heaven, and the poor lad smiled back at them, for this was *his* heaven.

"Go home now," said the painter, when the boy had stood motionless while the easel was set up.

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"May I see you paint?" asked the boy. "May I look on while you put the picture on your white canvas?"

"I am not going to paint yet," answered the man, taking up his black crayon. His hand moved quickly, his eye measured the great picture; and, although only a few fine strokes were visible, there stood the Christ on the canvas as He stands in the coloured picture.

"Now, go home with you," said the painter; and the boy walked silently homeward, sat himself down at the table and learned to sew gloves.

But all day long his thoughts were in the picture gallery; he pricked his fingers, worked clumsily, but did not tease Bellissima. When the evening closed in, and the house-door stood wide open, he stole out.

It was cold, but starlight, bright, and pleasant. He wandered through the desolate streets till he stood again before the metal pig; he kissed it and got on to its back. "Oh, you dear pig, how I have longed for you!" he cried; "we must have a ride together to-night!"

The metal pig stood motionless, with the clear spring flowing from its snout. The child bestrode him, and something pulled gently at his dress: he looked down, it was Bellissima, the little half-shorn Bellissima, barking as much as to say, "Look! I am here, too. What are you sitting there for?" No fiery dragon could have frightened the lad more than Bellissima did in that place, and at that hour. Bellissima in the open street without her wraps! not *dressed*, as her mistress used to say! What would become of him? The little dog never came out in the winter without wearing a little jacket of lambskin, cut out and made expressly for her. The jacket was prettily trimmed with bows and tiny bells, and tied on with scarlet ribbon. The dog looked like a little kid when it was allowed to

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trot along in this costume by its mistress's side. Bellissima out of doors and not dressed! What would not happen? All dreams and fancies were come to an end; the boy kissed the metal pig and took Bellissima under his arm; the dog was trembling with cold, so the boy ran as fast as he could.

"What are you running off with?" cried two policemen, at whom Bellissima barked. "Where have you stolen that little dog?" and they took it from him.

"Oh, give it me back!" implored the child.

"If you have not stolen it, you can tell them at home to send for it to the police-station," and away they went with Bellissima.

There was a calamity! The little one did not know whether to go and jump into the Arno or to go home and confess everything. "They will certainly kill me," he thought. "But I will gladly be killed—I can but die, and then I shall go to the Madonna;" and he went home principally that he might be killed.

The door was shut; he could not reach the knocker; no one was in the street, but a stone lay there, and with that he thundered against the door. "Who is there?" came a voice from within.

"It is I," he said; "Bellissima is gone—let me in, and then kill me."

Terror seized Madame's soul; she glanced at the wall, the little lambskin jacket was hanging there.

"Bellissima at the police-station!" she cried. "You wicked boy! how did you entice her out? She will be frozen! That poor little creature all among those rough men!"

The old man was sent out in search at once—the woman bewailed herself—the boy cried. All the neighbours came in, and among them was the painter; he

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took the boy between his knees, questioned him, and by degrees drew from him the whole story of the metal pig and the picture gallery—and it was rather a puzzling story at the best. The painter soothed the child, and tried to pacify the woman, but she utterly refused to be comforted till her husband came back with Bellissima, rescued from the police-station. Then there was an outburst of joy! The painter caressed the little lad and gave him a handful of drawings.

Such comical heads—such splendid sketches! And if the metal pig itself was not among them! Nothing could be more delightful. Only a few strokes, and there it was on the paper; and even the house behind it was there, too!

Why, any one who can paint can summon up the whole world round him in his home!

At earliest dawn on the next day the boy took up a lead pencil and tried to copy the metal pig on the back of one of the drawings. He managed it—it was rather on one side, perhaps, rather up and down, one leg thick and one thin, but every one could recognize it; the lad himself was rejoiced at it.

He saw well that the pencil would not go as straight as it ought; the next day another metal pig appeared on another drawing; that was a hundred times better; the third was so good that every one owned it.

But the glove-making fared badly, and errands in the city fared still worse: the metal pig had taught the lad that all pictures can be put on paper; and the whole city of Florence is a picture-book, if one will but turn over the leaves. In the Piazza della Trinita is a slender column, and on the column stands Justice, with bandaged eyes, holding her balance. She too came on the white paper, and it was the glove-maker's little 'prentice who

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had placed her there. The picture-gallery increased, but as yet it contained nothing but studies of still life; when one day up came Bellissima frolicking round the child. "Stand still," he cried, "and then you shall come into my gallery." But Bellissima would not stand still, and was obliged to be tied by her head and her tail.

She leaped and struggled till the string was pulled quite tight; and at her barks up came her mistress. "You wicked, wicked boy! my poor dog!" was all that she could articulate: she thrust the boy from her, drove



him from the house as an ungrateful vagabond and hardened lad, and turned back to lament over the half-strangled Bellissima.

Just at the moment the painter was coming up the staircase, and—this is the crisis of the whole story.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition of paintings in the *Accademia delle Arti*. Two pictures, hung side by side, attracted a crowd of spectators. The smaller one represented a merry little lad drawing. His model was an oddly-shorn white poodle, which had evidently

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refused to sit still, and consequently had been tied up by its head and tail: there was a vividness and truth in the little painting that spoke to every heart. The painter—so people said—was a poor, self-taught Florentine, who had been taken out of the streets when quite a little child by an old glove-maker. A well-known painter had discovered his talent just as the boy was being driven out of the house, because he had tied up his mistress's favourite poodle to make her his model.

The picture—and the larger one by its side still more clearly—showed that the glove-maker's little 'prentice-boy had become a great painter. In the second picture a beautiful, ragged boy sat sleeping in the street, his head leaning against the metal pig which stands near the Porta Rosa. All the spectators knew the spot. The child's arms were thrown over the pig's neck; the little one was sound asleep, and the lamp in front of the Madonna cast a bright light across the child's pale, lovely face.

It was a wonderful painting, in a rich gold frame; at each corner hung a laurel wreath, but between the green leaves was twisted a black ribbon, and a long fall of crape hung down to the ground.

. The young artist was dead.



The Neighbours.



ANY one would have thought that something important was going on in the duck-pond; but nothing at all was happening. All the ducks who were resting quietly on the water—or standing on their heads in it, and they can do that—swam all at once to the shore; you could see their footmarks in the wet earth and hear their quacking far and wide. The pond—smooth as a mirror a moment ago—was ruffled all at once with a great commotion. A few minutes back it mirrored every tree and bush in the neighbourhood—the old farm-house with the holes in the thatch, and the swallows' nests, and, above all, the great rose-bush all ablaze with roses; it covered the whole wall, and hung down towards the water, where everything was seen as in a picture, only that all the objects stood upon their heads, as it were; now that the water was so deeply stirred, one thing flowed into another, and there was an end of the picture. Two feathers, which some of the ducks had let fall, rocked to and fro; suddenly they darted forwards as if the wind had come, but it never came, so they had to stay where they were; and the water gradually grew smooth again. The roses mirrored themselves once more; they were wondrously lovely, but they knew it not, for no one had ever told them. The sun shone through their delicate

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green leaves, all breathed out sweetest fragrance, all felt as we feel when we are penetrated with the consciousness of our happiness.

"How beautiful it is to live!" cried the roses. "Only one thing I wish, and that is to kiss the sun; it is so warm and mild. And I should like to kiss our sister roses in the pond below; and the pretty little birds in the nest. There are some overhead, too; they put out their heads and twitter faintly; they have no feathers like their father and mother. They are good neighbours—those above and those below. How beautiful it is to live!"

The young birds above and below—those below, indeed, were only the reflection of the others in the pond—were sparrows: their parents were sparrows, too; they had taken possession of the empty swallow's nest, and lived in it as if it belonged to them.

"Are those ducks' children swimming about down there?" said the young sparrows, pointing to the feathers on the water.

"If you want to ask a question, *do* ask something sensible," said the mother. "Don't you see that they are feathers, living clothes, such as I wear myself, and such as you will wear? Only ours are finer. All the same, I wish we had them up here; they would help keep the nest warm. I am curious to know what the ducks were so frightened at: it couldn't be at us, though I certainly said 'Tweet' rather loudly. Those stupid roses ought to know, but they never know anything; they only look at themselves, and send out fragrance. I am heartily sick of such neighbours."

"Listen to those dear little birds up there," said the roses; "they are beginning to try and sing, but they hardly can manage it yet. They will soon learn; and

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what a pleasure that must be! It is nice to have such merry neighbours."

Suddenly two horses came galloping up to be watered; a peasant lad was riding on one of them; he had laid aside most of his clothes, but he wore his large, black, broad-brimmed hat. He rode boldly to the deepest part, whistling like a bird, and as he passed the rose-bush he gathered one of the roses, stuck it in his hat, and so rode off gaily adorned. The other roses looked after their sister, and said, "Whither is she going?" But no one knew.

"I should like to go out into the world," said one of them; "and yet it is beautiful here at home. All day long the sun shines warm and bright; and at night the heaven is lovelier still; we can see that through all the little holes." It was the stars she meant, but she knew no better.

"We make it lively for the old house," said the sparrows; "and the swallow's nest brings luck, folks say, so that the people may well be proud of us. But what neighbours! A rose tree like that against the wall creates damp; I should think it will be got rid of and corn sown in its place. The roses are good for nothing but to look at, and to smell, or, at the most, to stick in one's hat. Every year—I know that from my mother—they fall off. The farmer's wife stores them up and strews salt between them; then they receive a French name, which I neither can nor will pronounce, and they have to be sprinkled on fire if they are to smell sweet. That is their path in life: they only exist for the eye and the nose; and now you know."

When the evening closed in and the gnats danced in the warm air under the rosy clouds, the nightingale flew up to sing to the roses. She sang that the beautiful

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fades like the sunlight in this world—and that the beautiful lives for ever! The roses thought that the nightingale was singing of himself, and one might well think so; but they never imagined that the song was meant for them alone. They were very happy in listening, however, and wondered whether all the young sparrows would grow up into nightingales. "I could understand that bird perfectly," said the young sparrows; "all but one word, that is—what is the beautiful?" "Nothing at all," said the mother sparrow; "at least, something purely for outside show. Up yonder, in the courtyard of the castle, where the pigeons have a house of their own, and corn and peas served out to them every day—I have dined with them myself, and so shall you, in time; for, tell me your friends, and I will tell who you are—up yonder, at the castle, there are two birds with green necks and a crest on their heads; they can spread out their tails like a great wheel; it is painted with every colour and dazzles one's eyes quite painfully. These birds are called peacocks, and *that* is the beautiful. If they were only plucked a little they would look no better than we do. I would have plucked them already if they had not been so big."

"I will pluck them," chirped the youngest sparrow, who had, as yet, no feathers of his own.

In the farm-house lived two young married people, who loved each other dearly, and were cheerful and industrious. Everything round them looked bright and pretty. On Sunday mornings the young wife came out and gathered a handful of the loveliest roses, which she placed in a glass of water on the sideboard.

"Now I know that it is Sunday," said the young farmer. He kissed his little wife, and they sat down and read together out of the prayer-book, hand in hand; the

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sunlight fell across the roses and rested on the youthful pair.

"That sight is quite too tedious," said the mother sparrow, who could see into the room from her nest; "quite too tedious." And she flew away.

The same thing happened on next Sunday, for every week fresh roses were put into the glass, and yet the rose-bush was covered with roses. The young sparrows had their feathers now, and would have liked to fly with their mother, but she would not allow them to do so, so they had to stay at home. She flew off alone, and however it may have happened I cannot tell, but there she was, caught in a snare which some boys had set in the hedge. The horse-hair held her leg so tightly that she thought it was being cut through, and trembled with pain and terror. The boys rushed up and seized the bird by no means gently.

"It's only a sparrow," they said; but they held her fast, and whenever she cried out they struck her on the beak.

In the farm-house lived an old man, a merry, wandering pedler, who knew how to cut out curious balls and figures of toilet soap. When he saw the boys, and heard them say they could do nothing with the bird, he said, "Shall we smarten it up a little?" The mother sparrow felt a deadly chill of fear. Out of his colour-box the old man took some bright gold, and sent the lads to fetch some white of an egg; the bird's feathers were covered first with the egg and then with the gold, till she was gilt all over. The glitter and finery only made her tremble in every limb. Then the old man tore away a piece of the red lining of his coat, cut it into vandykes till it looked like a cock's comb, and gummed it on the bird's head.

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"Now you shall see Mr. Goldcoat fly," said the old man, letting the sparrow loose. She flew away in mortal terror, ablaze with the radiant sunlight. How she glittered! All the sparrows—nay, even an old crow, though he was a *very* old bird—were startled at the sight, and flew after her to find out what she was.

Driven onwards by dread and horror, the sparrow made for her nest: she was ready to sink helpless to the earth. The number of the pursuing birds increased, and some of them already tried to peck her.

"Look at him! Just look at him!" they all cried. "Look at him! Just look at him!" cried the young sparrows, as she reached her nest. "It must be a young peacock; he is dressed in all colours; he dazzles one's eyes, just as our mother said. Tweet! That is the beautiful." And they pecked at the sparrow with their beaks so that she could not get in the nest; the poor bird was so hemmed in that she could not even say "Tweet!" much less "I am your mother!" And now the whole cruel flock set upon her and pulled out feather after feather, till she fell faint and bleeding into the rose-bush.

"Poor little thing!" cried all the roses. "Do not fear. We will hide you; lean your head on us."

But the sparrow opened her wings wide, drew them close to her side, and fell dead by the side of her neighbours, the fair, sweet roses.

"Tweet!" echoed from the nest above. "Where can mother be staying? It is quite incomprehensible! We don't hear even a chirp from her. Can it mean that we are to shift for ourselves? She has left us the nest as our inheritance. Now, to which of us must it belong when we are all married?"

"Yes; I can't have you staying with me when I set

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up housekeeping, with a wife and children," said the youngest.

"Indeed! I shall most likely have more wives and children than you," said the second.

"But I am the eldest," cried the third. Then they all grew hot over it, flapped their wings, and pecked with their beaks, till, flop! one after the other fell out of the nest on to the ground. There they lay, their heads on one side, their eyes blinking furiously—in a terrible temper. That was their stupid way of behaving.

They could fly a little, and practice improved them. At last they all hit upon a signal by which they would be able to recognize each other if they afterwards met in the world. The signal was "Tweet" and three scrapes with the left foot.

The sparrow who was left in possession of the nest made himself as big as he could, for he was now sole proprietor. But his grandeur did not last long, for that very night the roof caught fire, the whole house was burned down, and the sparrow with it; the young master and mistress, however, escaped unhurt. When the sun rose, and all around looked as if it had just awoke from a refreshing sleep, nothing was left of the farm-house but a few old blackened beams by the chimney, who was now his own master. Smoke was still rising in clouds from the ruins; but outside the rose-bush bloomed unharmed, fresh and beautiful as ever; every flower and spray was mirrored in the clear water.

"See how lovely the roses look by that blackened house!" cried a passer-by. "No one could imagine anything more picturesque! I must jot it down."

And the speaker took out a little book with white leaves; he was a painter, and with his rapid pencil he

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sketched the smoking house, the blackened beams, the falling chimney, which seemed tottering more and more: but in the foreground was the lovely rose-bush which had suggested the whole picture.

Later in the day two of the sparrows came back; "Where is the house?" they cried. "Where is the nest? Tweet! Everything is burned down, and our brother into the bargain! That's what *he* has got by keeping our nest. The roses have got off well. There they stand, with their pink cheeks; they are not the people to fret about other folk's troubles. I have no wish to accost them, and it is very ugly here in my opinion." And they flew away.

On a clear, sunny, autumn day—a day that looked like the middle of summer—flocks of pigeons, black, white, and coloured, hopped to and fro in the courtyard of the castle. How they glittered in the sunshine! The mother pigeon said to her young ones, "Place yourselves in groups! Place yourselves in groups! That looks much better."

"What are those little grey creatures hopping after us?" asked an old pigeon, with red and green eyes. "Little greycoats! Little greycoats!" she cried.

"They are sparrows—good sort of folk. We have always kept up our reputation for piety and charity, so we had better allow them to pick up the grain. They don't address us, and they bow and scrape very properly."

So they did; three times with the right foot, three times with the left foot, and then they said "Tweet!" On which they recognized each other at once as the sparrows belonging to the old nest.

"Very good living here," said the sparrows. The pigeons puffed themselves out, strutted proudly about,

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and had their own opinion about everything. "Do you see that pouter pigeon?" said one of them. "Just look how she gobbles up the peas! She eats too much, and picks out all the best! Cur-roo! Cur-roo! How she sets up her crest—the ugly, spiteful thing! Cur-roo! Cur-roo!"

Every eye sparkled with malice. "Place yourselves in groups! Place yourselves in groups! Little greycoats! Little greycoats!" so the chatter went on—and so it may go on for thousands of years.

The sparrows ate with a will: they listened attentively to all that was said, and even tried to place themselves in groups, but it was not becoming to them. They had eaten enough now, so they left the pigeons, and talked them over freely among themselves; then they slipped under the garden pallisading, and, as the house door was open, one of them who had eaten so much that he felt quite courageous, hopped on to the threshold. "Tweet!" he cried, "I can venture so far!"

"Tweet!" said another, "so dare I, and a little farther too!" And he hopped into the room. No one was there; and the third, who had noticed that, flew still farther in, crying, "Neck or nothing! This is a queer-looking human nest; and what have they got there? Now, what is that?"

Right before the sparrows bloomed the roses, and mirrored themselves in the water by the blackened beams and falling chimney. "Now, what can that be? However did it get here in the castle?"

The sparrows tried to fly over the rose-bush and round the chimney, but they only flew against a dead wall. It was a large, beautiful painting, which the painter had made from his little sketch.

"Tweet!" cried the sparrows, "it is nothing! It

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only looks like something. Tweet! that is the beautiful! Can you make anything of it? *I can't.*" And they flew away, for some people came into the room.

Days and years passed away: the pigeons had often cooed and quarrelled, the spiteful birds. The sparrows had frozen in winter, and in summer had lived in clover; they were all betrothed or married, or whatever they call it. All had young families; and each bird thought his own the cleverest and best looking; one flew this way, and one that, and whenever they met they recognized each other by their "Tweet!" and scrape with the left foot. The eldest had remained a spinster, with neither nest nor young ones; it was her great fancy to see large cities, so she flew to Copenhagen.

There she saw a large, bright-looking house, close to the castle and the canal, where myriad little boats, laden with apples and crockery, sailed to and fro. The windows were broader below than above, and when the sparrow peeped through them the rooms looked to her like tulips, so gay and rich in colour. In the tulips stood figures of white marble, and some of gypsum, but that was all one to the sparrow. On the roof was a metal chariot drawn by metal horses, and driven by the Goddess of Victory. It was Thorwaldsen's Museum.

"What a glitter! What a show!" said the sparrow. "That must be the beautiful! Tweet! But it is larger than a peacock." She recalled what her mother had told her about the beautiful in the days of her youth. She flew down into the court; all around her was grand and splendid; palm branches were painted on the walls, and in the centre of the court a rose-tree in full bloom drooped its rich blossoms over a grave.

The sparrow flew towards it, for she saw several other birds of her own kind. "Tweet!" and three scrapes

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with her left foot; how often had she given the signal through the past year, and no one had answered, for people once parted do not meet every day; the greeting had grown into a habit with her.

But on this occasion three old sparrows and one young one answered with "Tweet!" and three scrapes of the left foot. "Dear me; good morning! and so we meet here. It is a fine place, but there is very little to eat. That is the beautiful! Tweet!"

Several people came out of the corridors where the lovely statues stood; they approached the grave of the master whose hand had created the marble forms. All of them stood with reverent faces round Thorwaldsen's grave; and some of them picked up a few of the fallen rose-leaves. They had come from afar; from sea-girt England, from Germany, from France. The fairest lady gathered a rose and placed it on her bosom. The sparrows began to think that the roses were monarchs here, and that the whole place had been built for them. It certainly seemed very absurd to them; but as every one was showing love and honour to the roses, the sparrows did not wish to be left behind. "Tweet!" they cried, sweeping the ground with their tails, and blinking at the roses. They had not looked at them long before they felt certain that they were their old neighbours from the farmyard; and they were right. The painter who painted the picture had received permission to dig them up, and had given the whole tree to the architect, for no one had ever seen more beautiful roses. The architect had the tree planted over Thorwaldsen's grave, to bloom there for ever, as a symbol of the beautiful, and to offer up its fair pink leaves, that they might be carried away as memorials into many a distant land.

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"Are you settled in this place?" asked the sparrows.

The roses nodded; they recognized their old neighbours, and were glad to see them again. "How beautiful it is to live and blossom!" they cried; "to see old friends and happy faces every day!" "Tweet!" cried the sparrows. "Yes; they are the very same. We remember the duck-pond they sprung from. Tweet! And now what a position they have gained! Well, luck comes to some folk in their sleep! Look! there is a withered leaf—I can see it quite plainly." And they pecked and pecked at it till the leaf fell off. But the rose-bush stood there fresher and fairer than ever; the flowers gave out their fragrance in the sunshine; and shared the glory of the sculptor's immortal name.



A Rose from the Grave of Homer.



VERY Eastern song tells of the nightingale's love for the rose; and how in the silent starlit nights the feathered songster greets his beloved with a serenade.

Not far from Smyrna, under the tall

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plantain trees where the merchant drives his laden camels, who raise their heads and tread proudly on the sacred ground, I saw a blooming rose tree : wood pigeons flew among the branches of the trees, and their wings gleamed in the sunshine like mother-of-pearl.

The rose tree bore one flower more beautiful than all the rest, and to that one the nightingale poured out his love tale ; a dew-drop shone like a tear of pity on her petals, and the spray which bore her drooped above a few great stones.

“ Here rests the world’s greatest singer,” cried the rose ; “ my breath shall perfume his grave, my leaves shall rest upon it when the wind strips them from me. The singer of Troy became the dust from which I spring, I, a rose from the grave of Homer, am too sacred a thing to blossom for a poor nightingale ! ”

The nightingale sang himself to death. The camel driver came up with his laden beasts and black slaves ; his little son found the dead bird, and buried the sweet singer in Homer’s grave : the rose trembled in the wind.

Evening came on ; the rose folded her petals closer, slept and dreamed. It was a lovely summer’s day : a group of foreigners approached, they were making a pilgrimage to Homer’s grave. Among the strangers was a singer from the north, from the home of the white mist and the Aurora : he gathered the rose, pressed it in a book, and carried it away to another continent, to his distant fatherland. The rose faded from grief and died in the narrow book, which the stranger opened in his home, and said, “ Here is a rose from the grave of Homer ! ”

This was what the flower dreamed ; and she awoke and trembled in the wind : a dew-drop fell from her petals on the singer’s grave. The sun rose, the rose

glowed fairer than ever; the sun was shining bright, she was still in her own Asia. Footsteps were heard, and foreigners from Europe, such as the rose had seen in her dream, approached the spot. Among them was a poet from the north; he broke off the rose, kissed its leaves, and carried it away to the land of mist and of the Aurora.

The dead flower lies, dried and colourless, within his "Iliad," and, as in a dream, she hears him open the book and say, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer!"

The Little Mermaid.



AR out in the sea the water is as blue as the petals of the corn-flower, and as clear as the purest glass. But it is deep; deeper than any cable can reach, it would take many a steeple, piled one on the other, to reach the ground. That is where the seafolk live.

But do not fancy that the floor is only of bare, white sand: no, the most fantastic flowers and trees grow there; plants whose stems and leaves are so pliable that they yield to the slightest motion of the water, as if they were alive. Small and large fish glide through the branches, just as the birds do in the trees overhead. In the deepest part stands the sea-king's palace; the walls are of coral, and the narrow, pointed windows of the clearest amber; while the

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roof is formed of shells which open and shut as the water ebbs and flows. It is a lovely roof, for in every shell lies a gleaming pearl; a single one would lend lustre and value to a queen's crown.

The sea-king had been a widower for many years; and his mother kept house for him. She was a clever woman; very proud of her rank, and she always wore twelve oyster-shells on her tail; six being the utmost number which any other noble lady dared to put on. On the whole she deserved great praise, especially for her treatment of her grandchildren, the little sea-princesses. They were six beautiful children, but the youngest was the most beautiful of all; her skin was as fair and delicate as a rose-leaf, her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but neither she nor the others had feet, their bodies ended in a fish's tail.

All day long they played in the sea-king's palace,^{*} where living flowers grew out of the walls and along the corridors. The amber windows were wide open; and the fish swam in to them, as the swallows fly in to us when we open the windows; but the fish would swim close up to the princesses, eat out of their hands, and let themselves be stroked.

Outside the palace was a large garden filled with burning red and deep blue flowers; the fruit glowed like gold, and the flowers sparkled like living flame as they swayed their leaves and tendrils to and fro. The soil was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of sulphur; indeed, a strange blue glimmer lay on all around; it looked more as if one were standing in the air with the blue heaven above and below, than as if one were at the bottom of the sea. In deep calms the sun was visible; it looked like a great purple flower showering down light from its calyx.

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Each one of the little princesses had a small garden of her own, where she might sow and plant at will. One of them made her garden in the shape of a whale; another preferred to imitate the form of a mermaid, but the youngest made hers round like the sun, and planted it with red flowers. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful, and when the other sisters used to adorn themselves with the curious and beautiful things they found in wrecked vessels, she would never accept anything but the flowers that were red like the sun, and one beautiful marble statue. It was the statue of a youth, carved in pure white marble, and had sunk from a stranded ship to the bottom of the sea. She planted a rose red weeping-willow by the statue; the tree grew tall and drooped its beautiful branches over the marble towards the deep blue sand, so that the shadows deepened to violet, and when the branches stirred it seemed as if roots and crown were mingling in embraces.

The little mermaid's greatest delight was to listen to stories about the earth and human beings: her old grandmother was coaxed to tell her all she knew of ships and cities, men and animals; the child seemed to think it so wonderfully beautiful that the flowers which grew on the earth smelt so sweet, for under the water they have no smell. She loved to think and wonder that the trees were green, and that the little fishes in the trees sang so sweetly that it was a pleasure to hear them. The grandmother was obliged to call the birds fishes, or the little princess would not have known what she meant, because she had never seen a bird.

"When you are fifteen years old," said her grandmother, "you will have leave to rise to the surface of the sea. Then you can sit on the cliffs by moonlight and watch the ships sail by—you will see forests and



"She kept his head above water."

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cities." The next year the eldest sister was fifteen ; but as there was a whole year between each sister the youngest would have five long years to wait before she could rise to the surface of the sea and see what things look like in our world. But each one promised the others to tell them all she saw, and what she thought was the most beautiful ; for their grandmother did not tell them half enough, there was so much they wanted to have explained to them.

No one was more eager than the youngest ; the very one who had so long to wait, and who was always so silent and thoughtful. Many a night she stood at the open window looking up through the dark blue water and watching the fishes moving their tails and fins as they darted by. She saw the moon and stars ; they looked paler and larger through the water than they do through the air. Sometimes something like a black cloud would pass between her and the stars, (now it was a large whale and now a great ship crowded with men) but no one ever thought that a dear little mermaiden stood below stretching out her white hands towards the keel.

At last the eldest princess was fifteen, and obtained leave to rise to the surface of the sea.

When she came home again she had a hundred things to tell ; but the most beautiful of all, she said, was to lie on a sand-bank by moonlight above the quiet sea, and to watch the great city on the neighbouring coast, to see the lights gleam like a myriad stars, to hear the music, and noise, and roll of carriages, to see the forest of steeples, and hear the church bells ring.

How the youngest princess listened ! and later in the evening she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark blue water, thinking of the large city

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with its noise and din, and fancying she heard the church bells chiming through the water.

The next year the second sister obtained leave to rise to the surface, and swim whither she would. She rose up just at sunset, and she thought nothing could be more beautiful than the sunset sky. The whole sky shone like clear gold, and she had no words to describe the beauty of the clouds. Rose-coloured and violet, they sailed above her, and, more swiftly still, like a white veil unbound, came a flock of wild swans across the water under the setting sun. She swam to meet them, but the sun went down, and the rose-light died away on sea and sky.

The following year the third sister was allowed to go; she was the boldest of all, and ventured to swim inland, up a mighty river which flowed into the sea. Beautiful vine-grown hills rose on either side, castles and forts were seen through gloomy forests; the birds were singing sweetly, and the sun shone so warm, that from time to time it dipped beneath the water to cool its burning face. In a little bend of the river she came upon a group of naked children, playing about in the water; she tried to play with them, but they ran away in terror, and a little black animal—it was a dog—but she had never seen a dog before—barked so furiously that the sea-maiden hurried away to reach the open sea. But she never forgot the green woods, the vine-clad hills, and the pretty little children who could swim although they had no fish's tail.

The fourth sister was not so daring; she stayed in the open sea, and said nothing could be more beautiful than that. One could look round for miles, and overhead the boundless heavens hung like a glass bell. She had seen ships, but only from a great distance; they looked like

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seagulls; the merry dolphins had gambolled round her, and the great whales had sent up jets of water as if a thousand fountains had begun to play.

Now, it was the fifth sister's turn: her birthday happened in winter, so what she saw was quite different. The sea was one brilliant green, and the icebergs were swimming to and fro; each one looked like a pearl, the princess said, but larger than the steeples which men build upon the earth. They were of the strangest shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had sat upon one of them, and the sailing ships passed by in terror, as they saw her there, the wind playing with her golden hair. Towards night the sky was dark with cloud, the thunder rolled, the icebergs rose and fell on the black waves, red lightnings darted across their spectral forms. Every ship reefed her sails, an anxious dread filled every heart. But the young mermaiden sat quietly on her floating iceberg and watched the blue lightning strike the sea in zig-zag darts.

The first time each one of the sisters rose to the surface she was delighted with the new and beautiful things she saw; but when they were grown up and were allowed to leave their home as often as they pleased, they did not care about it. They longed to be at home again; and at the end of a month, they said it was prettier down below, and that home was the best after all.

Many an evening the five sisters rose to the surface arm in arm; they had lovely voices, more beautiful than we ever have; and whenever a storm was coming on, and they were afraid that some grand, beautiful ship would perish, they swam round the ships and sang to the sailors, bidding them have no fear, and telling them how beautiful it was down below. But the seamen could not understand, and thought it was the voice of the

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storm; they never saw the glory and beauty of the sea-world, for when the ship sank they died, and only reached the sea-king's palace as pale corpses.

When the five sisters rose thus, evening by evening, high through the water, the youngest was left alone, looking after them, and it seemed to her as if she must weep, but the mermaids have no tears, and for that very reason they suffer all the more.

"If I were only fifteen!" she cried. "I know that I shall dearly love the world above, and those who live upon it."

And at last the little mermaid was fifteen years old.

"Well, now you are grown up," said her grandmother, the late king's widow; "come, now, let me dress you like your other sisters." She placed a wreath of white lilies on her hair; but every leaf in the flower was half a pearl, and the old queen had eight great oyster shells arranged on the princess's tail to show her high rank.

"But they hurt me," said the little mermaid.

"Pride must bear a pinch," said the old queen.

Oh, how gladly the princess would have laid aside all this finery and taken off the heavy wreath! the scarlet flowers in her garden suited her better, but she could not change them now. "Farewell!" she cried, and rose light and clear as a foam bubble to the surface of the water.

The sun had just gone down as she lifted her head above the water; but the clouds were brilliant in purple and gold, and through the pale, rose-tinged air the evening star shone clear and bright: the air was warm and mild, the sea at rest. A great ship with three masts lay close by, one only sail unfurled, for there was no breath of air, and the sailors sat aloft in the rigging

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or leaned lazily over the bulwarks. Music and singing filled the air, and as the sky darkened hundreds of Chinese lanterns were lighted ; it seemed as if the flags of every nation were hung out. The little mermaid swam up to the cabin window, and every time she rose upon the waves she could see through the clear glass that the room was full of brilliantly dressed people. Handsomest of all was the young prince with the great dark eyes : he could not be more than sixteen years old, and this was his birthday. All this gaiety was in honour of him ; the sailors danced upon the deck ; and when the young prince came out a myriad of rockets flew high in air, with a glitter like the brightest noontide, and the little mermaid was so frightened that she dived deep down under the water. She soon rose up again, however, and it seemed as if all the stars of heaven were falling round her in golden showers. Never had she seen such fireworks ; great, glittering suns wheeled by her, fiery fishes darted through the blue air, and all was reflected back from the quiet sea. The ship was lighted up so that one could see the smallest rope ; how handsome the young prince looked ! He shook hands with everybody and smiled as the music rang out into the glorious night.

It grew late, but the little mermaid could not turn away her eyes from the ship and the handsome prince. The coloured lanterns were put out, no rocket rose in the air, no cannon boomed from the portholes ; but deep below there was a surging and a murmuring. The mermaid sat still, cradled by the waves, so that she could look in at the cabin window ; but now the ship began to make more way ; one sail after another was unfurled, the waves rose higher, clouds gathered in the sky, and there was a distant flash of lightning.

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The storm came nearer. All the sails were taken in, and the ship rocked giddily as she flew over the foaming billows; the waves rose mountain high, as if they would swallow up the very mast, but the good ship dived like a swan into the deep black trough and rose bravely to the foaming crest. The little mermaid thought it was a merry journey, but the sailors were of a different opinion. The ship strained and creaked, the timbers shivered as the thunder-strokes of the waves fell fast, heavy seas swept the decks, the mainmast snapped like a reed, and the ship lurched heavily, while the water rushed into her hold. Then the young princess began to understand the danger, and she herself was often threatened by the falling masts, yards, and spars. One moment it was so dark that she could see nothing, but when the lightning flamed out the ship was bright as day. She sought for the young prince, and saw him sinking down through the water as the ship parted. The sight pleased her, for she knew he must sink down to her home; but suddenly she remembered that men cannot live in the water, and that he would only reach her father's palace a lifeless corpse. No; he must not die! She swam to and fro among the drifting spars, forgetting that they might crush her with their weight; she dived and rose again, and reached the prince just when he felt that he could swim no longer in the stormy sea. His arms were beginning to fail him, his beautiful eyes were closed, in another moment he must have sunk, had not the little mermaid come to his aid. She kept his head above water, and let the waves carry them whither they would.

The next day the storm was over; not a spar of the ship was left in sight; the sun rose red and glowing from the waves, and seemed to pour down new life upon

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the prince, though his eyes remained closed. The little mermaid kissed his fair white forehead and stroked back his wet hair; he was like the marble statue in her little garden, she thought; she kissed him again, and prayed that he might live.

Suddenly the dry land came in sight before her, high blue mountains, on whose peaks the snow lay white, as if a flock of swans had settled there. On the coast below were lovely green woods, and close on shore a building of some kind, the mermaid did not know whether it was church or cloister. Citrons and orange trees grew in the garden, and before the porch were stately palm trees. The sea ran in here and formed a quiet bay, unruffled, but very deep; the little mermaid swam with the prince to the white sandy shore, laid him on the warm sand, and took care that his head was left where the sun shone warmest.

Bells began to chime and ring through all the great building, and several young girls entered the garden; the little mermaid swam farther out, behind a tiny cliff that rose above the waves; she showered sea-foam on her hair that no one might see its golden glory, and then she waited patiently to see if any one would come to the help of the young prince.

Before long a young girl came by; she gave a start of terror and ran back to call for assistance; several people came to her aid, and after a while the little mermaid saw the prince recover his consciousness, and smile upon the group around him. But he had no smile for her; he did not even know that she had saved him. Her heart sank, and when she had seen him carried into the large building, she dived sorrowfully down to her father's palace.

She had always been a silent, thoughtful child, and

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now the silence seemed to grow upon her; her sisters asked her what she had seen on her first visit to the earth, but she had nothing to tell them.

Many an evening and morning she rose to the place where she had left the prince. She watched the fruits in the garden ripen and fall; she saw the snow melt from the high mountains, but the prince she never saw, and she came home sadder than ever. Her one consolation was to sit in her little garden, with her arms clasped round the marble statue, which was like the prince; her flowers were neglected, and grew wild in a luxuriant tangle of stem and blossom, which reached the branches of the willow-tree, and made the whole place dark and dim.

At last she could bear it no longer, and she told one of her sisters: the other sisters learned the story then, but they told it to no one but a few other mermaids, who told it to their intimate friends. One of these friends knew who the prince was: she had seen the feast on board his ship, and told the princess where he came from and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister," said the princesses; and wreathing their arms each round another's waist they rose to the place where the prince's palace stood.

The palace was built of polished stone of a beautiful pale yellow tinge, and from the entrance splendid marble steps led down to the very water's edge. Gilded cupolas rose above the roof, and in the marble colonnades which surrounded the building were rare statues glowing with life. Through the clear windows, the mermaid said, one saw the stately rooms with their costly hangings, rich tapestries, and beautiful paintings, so that it was a pleasure only to look at them. In the centre of the outer hall played a silvery fountain, that rose up to its cupola

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of glass, and fell back with a pleasant splash and ripple to the basin, where rare water plants were growing.

Now she knew where he lived, and many a night she spent there, floating on the water; she ventured nearer to the land than any of her sisters had done; she even swam up the narrow lagoon under the carved marble balcony which cast its deep shadow over the water, and there she sat and watched the young prince when he thought himself alone in the moonlight.

Many an evening she followed him as he sailed along in his little boat, with music on board and banners flying; she peeped out of the green sedge, and if the wind lifted her white sail, people thought they saw a swan spreading her wings.

Many a night she listened to the fishermen as they cast out their nets by torchlight in the sea: they spoke often in praise of the young prince; and the little mermaid was glad that she had saved his life when he was drifting half lifeless across the seas. She remembered how his head had rested on her breast, and how she had kissed his brow; but he would never know, and could not even dream of her.

She began to love human beings more and more, to long to dwell among them: their world seemed larger and fairer than her own. They could sail across the sea in ships; climb the high mountains till they reached the clouds; and their countries, beautiful with fields and woodland, stretched far away beyond her sight. There was so much she wished to learn; her sisters could not answer her questions, so she asked her old grandmother, who knew a great deal about the world, or the lands above the sea, as she properly called it.

"If men are not drowned, do they live for ever?"

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asked the little mermaid. "Do they not die as we do under the sea?" "Yes," said her grandmother, "they die, and their term of life is shorter than ours. We may live three hundred years, and when we cease to be, we have not even a grave among our dear ones, but are changed to foam bells which float upon the crest of the waves. We have no immortal souls; we cannot live again; we are like the green sedge, if it is cut away it blooms no more. But men have a soul that lives for ever, even when the body has crumbled into dust; it rises through the air to the clear stars. Just as we rise to the surface that we may see the earth, they rise to an unknown, glorious world, which we may never see."

"Why have *we* no immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid, sadly. "I would give up all the years I have to live to be a human being only for one day, that I might share their heavenly home."

"You may not think of such a wish," said the old queen: "we are far happier and better than they are in the world."

"Then must I die, and drift like foam upon the waves? Shall I never hear the music of the waves, or see the lovely flowers, and golden sun? Can I do nothing to win an immortal soul?"

"Nothing!" said the queen. "Unless, indeed, a man loved you so dearly that you were more to him than father and mother; so dearly that he led you before the priest and laid his right hand in yours with the vow to be true to you for all eternity. Then, indeed, his soul would pass into your body; he would give you a soul and yet retain his own. But that can never be. Your fish's tail, which we think beautiful in the sea, would be looked upon with disgust on earth.

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They know no better: they think that in order to be beautiful it is necessary to move about on two heavy supports which they call legs."

The little mermaid glanced down at her fish's tail with a sigh.

"Let us be merry," said her grandmother; "let us dance and play for the three hundred years we have to live; it is quite long enough to make one glad of rest. We will give a court ball to-night."

Never had such a splendid festival been seen! The walls and ceiling of the ball-room were of glass, thick but transparent. Myriads of opal-tinted pearl shells, pink and green, hung in rows round the room, and gave out a fairy-like blue lustre, which lit up the whole room and the sea outside, so that one could see the fishes as they darted by the walls, some with violet scales, some gleaming in silver and gold. Through the centre of the hall flowed a crystal stream, along which danced the mermen and mermaids to the music of their own lovely voices. Such voices are never heard on earth. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than any: the whole court applauded with hands and tails, and for a moment a thrill of pleasure filled her heart as she thought that hers was the loveliest voice on land or sea. But the world above soon filled her heart again: she could not forget the handsome prince, or her sorrow that she had no immortal soul. She stole out of her father's palace, where all was mirth and gladness, and sat sad and solitary in her little garden. She heard the sound of the horn echoing faintly through the water. "Now he is sailing above me," she thought: "he who fills my heart: in whose hands I would gladly place my life's happiness. I will risk all for his sake, and to win an immortal soul. While my sisters are

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dancing in the palace, I will go to the old sea-witch. I fear her, but she may be able to help and counsel me now."

The little mermaid left her garden, and swam towards the roaring whirlpool, behind which the old witch lived. She had never visited the place before; no flowers or seaweed grew round her path; only desolate reaches of grey sand marked the way to the spot where the seething water spun round like mill-wheels and sucked in everything that approached it. The young princess had to pass through the cruel, giddy whirlpool to enter into the witch's kingdom; and when she had passed through, there lay before her no other path but a long stretch of warm bubbling slime, that the witch called her turf moor. The house stood in the centre of a ghastly wood; the trees were polypi, half plant, half animal; they looked like hundred-headed snakes rising out of the earth; the branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like pliant worms; and the whole tree was never still from root to crest. Everything that they could clutch they held fast and never loosed their hold again. At sight of them the young princess paused in deadly terror; her heart beat; she almost resolved to turn back, but at the thought of the young prince and her immortal soul, her courage returned. She wound her long, floating hair closely round her head, lest the polypi should seize it; she crossed her hands over her breast, and darted as only a fish can dart, through the ugly polypi, who stretched out their cruel, greedy fingers after her. She saw how everything within their reach was clutched tight by myriad tiny arms. Men, drowned at sea, showed their bleached white skeletons in the deadly clutch: rudders and chests they clung to, skeletons of land animals, and, most horrible

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of all, a poor little mermaid, whom they had caught prisoner and strangled.

She came next to a large marshy swamp in the wood, where great fat water-snakes crawled about and showed their ugly yellow bodies. In the middle of the swamp stood a house, built of the bones of shipwrecked men; there sat the sea-witch, letting a toad eat out of her mouth, as a canary-bird pecks sugar from its mistress's lips. She called the horrible, fat water-snakes her little chicks, and let them twine around her breast.

"I know your wish, and a foolish one it is," cried the sea-witch: "but you shall have your way, for it will plunge you into misery, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail, and to have two legs like human beings, so that the handsome prince may fall in love with you, and give you an immortal soul." And the witch broke out into a savage, sneering laugh, so that the toad and the snakes fell to the earth, and lay there grovelling. "You are come at the right time," said the witch. "To-morrow, after sunrise, I should not be able to help you till a year was past. I will prepare you a potion, with which you must swim to the land before sunrise: when you reach the shore, sit down and drink it off, but it will cause you pain. Your fish's tail will disappear and shrivel up into two beautifully formed legs; every one who beholds you will say you are lovelier than any child of man. You will keep your graceful walk; no dancer will equal you in lightness, and yet every step will cause you as much pain as if you trod on sharp knives that must draw blood. If you care to suffer all this I will help you."

"I do," said the little mermaid, with a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and her immortal soul.

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"Remember!" said the witch, "when you have once assumed a human form you can never again be a mermaid—never return to your home, or to your sisters more; and, should you fail to win the prince's love so that he leaves father and mother for your sake, and lays his hand in yours as you stand man and wife before the priest, an immortal soul will never be granted you. On the same day that he marries another, your heart will break, and you will drift as sea foam on the water."

"So let it be," said the little mermaid, turning pale as death.

"But you will have to pay me also," said the witch; "and it is not a little that I ask. Yours is the loveliest voice in the world, and you trust to that, I dare say, to charm your love; but you must give it to me. I claim the best thing you possess for my costly drink. I shall have to give you my own blood, so that the draught may be sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice from me, what have I left?" said the little mermaid, piteously.

"Your loveliness, your graceful movements, your speaking eyes; those are enough to win a man's heart. Well, is your courage gone? Stretch out your little tongue that I may cut it off for payment, and you shall have the magic potion."

"I consent," said the little mermaid. The witch set a cauldron on the fire to boil the draught. "Cleanliness is a fine thing," she said, wiping out the cauldron with a bundle of snakes tied into a knot. She then gashed her breast and let her blood flow into the cauldron, the steam arising from it twisted and writhed in fantastic shapes that filled the heart with ghastly horror. Every moment the witch threw something fresh into the draught, and when it boiled it sounded

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like a crocodile weeping. At length the potion was ready: it looked like clear water.

"There you have it," said the witch, but the little mermaid could not answer her: she was dumb, and would never speak or sing again.

"If the polypi catch hold of you as you go through my wood," said the witch, "throw one drop of the potion on them, and their arms and fingers will shiver into a thousand pieces." But the little princess had no need to do so; for the polypi shrank back in terror at sight of the glittering potion which shone in her hand like a glorious star, and the princess passed quickly through the wood and the swamp and the roaring whirlpool.

She could see her father's palace; the lights were extinguished in the ball-room: all within were doubtless sleeping: she could not call them out to her now that she was dumb and about to leave them for ever. It seemed as if her heart were breaking; she gathered a flower from each of her sister's gardens, kissed her hand to the palace, and rose slowly through the dark-blue water.

The sun was not yet risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace. The moon was shining silver clear as the little mermaid drank the magic potion; a sharp pain thrilled through her delicate body, and she fell fainting to the earth. When the sun stood high over the sea, she awoke and felt a keen pain; but before her stood the handsome prince; his dark eyes rested on hers, till they fell before his glance; she saw then that the fish's tail had disappeared, and that she lay there in human form, veiled from head to foot by her golden hair. The prince asked her who she was and whence she came, and she raised her soft blue eyes to his face in sorrowful silence. He led her into the palace, and,

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as the witch had warned her, each step pained her as if she trod on sharp edged knives ; but she bore it gladly, and, holding the prince's hand, passed light and graceful as a foam flake into the palace.

Rich dresses of muslin and silk were given to her, and she was pronounced to be lovelier than all besides ; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Slave girls in dresses of silk and gold stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents ; one of them sang better than all the rest, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. Then the little mermaid felt what she had lost. She knew that she could have sung infinitely better, and she thought, " Oh ! could he but know that for his sake I have sacrificed my voice to all eternity ! "

Then the slave girls began their graceful dance to the sound of music ; and when they had ended, the little mermaid raised her fair, white arms, hovered for a moment on the point of her toes, and rose in the air in a dance so graceful that none had ever seen its equal ; every movement revealed her unearthly loveliness, and her eyes said more to the soul than the songs of the slave girls.

Every one was enraptured with her, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling ; she danced on, though every time that her feet touched the earth, it was as if she trod on sharp knives. The prince said that she must stay with him always ; and she obtained permission to sleep on a velvet cushion outside his door.

He ordered that a suit of boy's clothes should be made for her, so that she might accompany him when he rode out on horseback. They rode through the fresh scented woods, where the branches stooped to touch

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their shoulders, and the birds sang from among the leaves. She climbed the high mountains at the prince's side, and though her tender feet were quivering with pain, she laughed at her suffering, and followed him till they saw the clouds sail beneath their feet like a flock of birds flying to distant lands.

At home, in the prince's palace, when all were sleeping, she would wander down the marble staircase and cool her burning feet in the sea water, while she thought of her dear ones in the depths below.

One night her five sisters rose up arm-in-arm, singing sadly as they floated on the waves : the little mermaid beckoned to them ; they recognized her, and told her how they had mourned her loss. From that time she stole down to see them every night, and once she saw, far out at sea, her old grandmother, who had not risen to the surface for years, and the sea king, her father, with the crown on his royal head. They stretched out their hands in greeting, but dared not come so near the land as her sisters had done.

Day by day she grew dearer to the prince ; but he loved her as one loves a good and beautiful child ; the thought of making her his queen never once crossed his mind, and yet, unless she became his wife, she could never win an immortal soul, and must be changed on his wedding morning into cold sea-foam.

" Do you not love me best of all ? " the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to ask, when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair, white brow.

" Best of all," answered the prince, " for you have a truer heart than all the rest, and love me more sincerely than they. And you remind me of a young girl whom I saw once, but may never see again. I was on a ship which was lost, and the waves threw me upon the shore

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close to the gate of a sacred temple, where several young maidens carry on the holy service. The youngest of them found me on the shore and saved my life: I only saw her twice, and yet I know that I shall never love another—unless, indeed, you drive her image from my heart, for you are very like her. Besides, she is dedicated to the temple service; I think that my good fairy has sent you to me in her stead, so we will never part."

"Alas! he knows not that it was I who saved his life. I bore him above the waves to the shore where the temple stands, and waited to watch whether any one would come to save him. I, too, saw the beautiful girl whom he loves more than me!" The young princess sighed deeply; she could not weep. "The maiden belongs to the holy temple," he says; "she will never come out into the world; they can not meet again; but I am with him every day. I will watch over him, love him, and sacrifice my life for him."

The time came for the prince to marry; people said that he would choose the fair daughter of the king of a neighbouring country to be his wife. A stately ship was fitted out; it was announced that the prince was about to travel, but every one knew the object of the journey. A retinue of courtiers followed him. The little mermaid shook her head and smiled; she knew better than any one what was in the prince's heart. "I must take the journey," he had said to her; "I must see the princess, as my parents wish it: but they will never force me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her, for she will not resemble the beautiful girl in the temple. If I must take a bride, I would rather it were you, my silent foundling, with the lovely, speaking eyes." He kissed her rosy lips, played with her fair hair,

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and leaned his head upon her heart, which beat high with dreams of earthly joy and an immortal soul.

"You do not fear the sea, child?" he said to her, as they stood together on the splendid ship that was bearing them away to the home of the royal maiden. He spoke to her of storms and calms, of strange creatures in the deep, and of what the divers had seen below: the little mermaid smiled at his words; who should know better than she what happens down beneath the waves?

In the moonlight nights, when all were sleeping, even to the helmsman at his post, she sat on the bulwarks looking down through the clear water: she fancied she could see her father's palace: there stood her grandmother, wearing her silver crown and looking up to the keel through the foaming track left by the vessel. Her sisters rose out of the water, looked at her sorrowfully and wrung their white hands. She waved her hand to them and smiled, that they might know that she was happy; but the cabin-boy came up, and the sisters dived beneath the waves, so that the lad thought he had seen nothing but white foam.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbour. It was a splendid city; the church-bells were ringing, trumpets were sounding from the high fortress towers, soldiers with banners and glittering bayonets were drawn up to receive the prince. Every day was a holiday. Balls and festivals succeeded each other, but the princess had not yet arrived from the holy temple where she had been brought up and instructed in all royal virtues. At last she came.

The little mermaid was eager to see her beauty, and she was forced to own it. Never had she seen a lovelier face; the skin was fair and delicate, and from beneath

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the long lashes looked out a pair of deep blue, trustful eyes.

"It is she!" cried the prince, as he clasped the blushing maiden in his arms. "She who saved me when I lay lifeless on the shore. This is too much happiness!" he cried to the little mermaid; "the highest hope I ever dared to cherish is fulfilled! You will rejoice with me I know, for you loved me best of all."

The little mermaid kissed his hand, and thought her heart was breaking—now it was all over: on his wedding morning she would die and be changed to foam upon the waves.

The church-bells rang, heralds rode through the streets announcing the betrothal: on every balcony fragrant oils burned in silver lamps. The priests swung their censers, and the bride and bridegroom stood hand in hand to receive the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid was dressed in silk and gold; she held up the bride's train, but her ears heard nothing of the joyous music, her eyes saw nothing of the sacred rites—she was thinking of her coming death, and of all that she had lost for ever.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board; cannon thundered, banners waved, and on deck a splendid tent of purple and gold, fitted with soft silken cushions, was set up for the bridal chamber.

The sails swelled in the wind, and the ship glided smoothly across the quiet water.

As the evening closed in coloured lamps were lighted, and the sailors danced merrily on deck; the little mermaid thought of the first night she rose above the waves, and saw the same festal splendour. She too joined in the dance, hovering as swallows hover when they are pursued; applause broke out on all sides, for she had never danced so beautifully before. The

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sharp pains darted sword-like through her tiny feet, but she could not feel them for the keener pain at her heart. She knew that she was looking for the last time on him for whom she had forsaken friends and home, sacrificed her lovely voice, and suffered daily anguish — while he never dreamed of her devotion. It was the last night that she should breathe the same air with him, or look upon the sea and the starry sky. An eternal night, stirred by no thought or dream, awaited her, for she could never win an immortal soul. All around her spoke of joy and happiness; midnight was passed, and still she danced on, with death at her heart.

At length the ship grew silent; only the helmsman stood by his wheel; the little mermaid crossed her arms upon the bulwarks and looked eastward: the first ray of light, she knew, would flash out her death warrant. Suddenly her sisters rose from out the waves; they too were pale, and their long, fair hair was cut off!

"We have given it to the witch, that she might send us to your aid and save your life. She sends you this knife: see how sharp it is! Before the sun rises you must pierce the prince to the heart, and when the blood flows, sprinkle it on your feet. Then you shall regain your former shape, and come back to live out your three hundred years before you die and float like foam upon the waves. Hasten! for he or you must die before the sunrise. Our grandmother mourns so deeply that her white hair has fallen, like ours, beneath the witch's shears. Kill the prince and return. Do you see that red streak in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise and you must die!" And, sighing deeply, they sank beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew aside the purple covering of the tent and saw the fair bride's head resting upon the

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prince's breast: she stooped down to kiss his brow, looked at the eastern sky, which brightened every moment, at the sharp knife, and at the prince, who murmured in his sleep the name of his new made bride. She alone filled all his thoughts. The knife trembled in the mermaid's hand—with a shudder she threw it far into the sea; the water glowed red where it fell, it looked as if blood-drops sprang up from the waves. Once more the little mermaid looked upon the prince with eyes that were already growing dim—she sprang over the ship's side, and felt herself dissolving into foam.

The sun rose from the sea, and its rays fell so warm and bright upon the waves that as yet the little mermaid felt nothing of death. She could see the sun, and between herself and it floated myriads of beautiful forms, and through them she saw the ship's white sails and the rosy clouds above. A new language fell upon her ear, sweet, but so faint that no human ear could catch the tone, just as no human eye could see the fair forms that hovered—by no aid of wings, upheld by their own lightness alone—in the morning air. The little mermaid saw that she had a body like them, and was rising gradually from the foam.

"Where am I?" she cried, and her voice sounded sweet and faint, such as no earthly music can give back.

"Among the daughters of the air," answered the others. "Mermaids can never win an immortal soul unless they gain the love of a human being; their fate does not lie in their own hand. The daughters of the air have no immortal soul, but they can win one by their good deeds. We fly to torrid lands where men are stricken down by heavy pestilence, and give them

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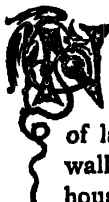
coolness. We scatter the fragrance of flowers through the air, and spread abroad health and freshness. When we have striven for three hundred years to do all the good we can, we receive an immortal soul, and share with human beings in the heavenly joy. You, poor little sea-maiden, have striven with your whole heart as we strive; you have suffered and sacrificed—now you are raised to the world of the air, and, after three hundred years, you will receive an immortal soul."

The little mermaid lifted her eyes to heaven, and for the first time felt them full of tears. The ship was once more full of life and movement; she saw the prince and his young bride seeking for her; they looked down sadly at the pearly foam, as if they knew that she had plunged into the waves.

Invisible, she kissed the bride, fanned the prince's brow, and rose with the other children of the air up to the gold and crimson clouds sailing through the clear sky.

"So—when three hundred years have passed away—shall we rise into God's kingdom," whispered one of her companions. "Unseen, we enter into the houses of men; and every day we see a good child, who loves his parents and fills their lives with joy, our time of probation is shortened by a year. The child dreams not of it as we pass by; but if his goodness wins a happy smile from us, a year is taken from our trial: while every tear we shed at the sight of a naughty, bad-hearted child keeps us back one day longer from our rest in heaven."

Ib and Christina.



NOT far from the silver river Gudenan, in North Jutland, in the forest which stretches far inland from the river bank, rises a ridge of land, and runs through the wood like a fortress wall. To the west of this mound stands a farmhouse surrounded by poor land, where the sandy soil showed through the thin crops of rye and barley. A few years ago, the people who lived here worked the farm, and had besides, three sheep, a pig, and two oxen. In a word, they had plenty to eat and enough to live on, if one takes life as it comes; indeed, they could have afforded to keep two horses, but they said, as the other farmers of the district did, that a horse eats himself up—wastes as much as he gets. Jeppe-Jans worked in his field in summer, and in winter he made wooden shoes. He had a man to help him in this latter trade; one who, like himself, could make the shoes strong, light, and shapely: they carved wooden spoons as well, and that brought in money. It would have been doing the Jeppe-Jansens wrong to say that they were poor folk.

Little seven-year-old Ib, the only son, used to sit watching them at their work, and cutting away at a stick, or, as it sometimes happened, at his own finger; but one day he made such progress that his bit of stick was cut into something that looked like tiny wooden shoes, and then Ib said that he would give them to Christina. Who was Christina? She was the boat-

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man's little daughter, as fair and delicate as the child of a duke: if she had only had better clothes no one could have thought that her home was that little hovel on the heath. Her father was a widower, and earned his living by taking boat-loads of fuel from the forest to the eel-pond and the eel-weir at Silkeborg; sometimes he even went as far as the little town of Randers.

There was no one to look after Christina while he was away, so that the little girl was generally with him in the boat, or in the forest among the ferns and brambles; once his business took him as far as the little town, and that was it which brought Christina across the heath to Jeppe-Jansen's.

She was a year younger than Ib, and they agreed together in everything; they shared each other's bread and blackberries when they were hungry, they grubbed together in the sand, they ran and crawled and played about together everywhere. One day they walked by themselves along the ridge of the mound, and far into the forest; one day they found some snipe's eggs—that was a great event.

Ib had never been on the heath where Christina's father lived, and had never been on the river; but both these pieces of good luck befell him, for Christina's father invited him, and took him to the lonely hut on the heath.

It was evening when Ib arrived, and the next morning he and Christina sat perched upon the logs of timber in the boat, eating bread and blackberries, while the father and his man pushed the boat forward by the aid of their long poles: the current was with them, and they made good way. Sometimes the river opened into lakes, sometimes it seemed closed in by wood, and reeds, and sedge; but still the boat moved onward, even

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though the great trees bent down to meet the water,
and the peeled oak branches stretched towards them,



as if they had turned up their shirt-sleeves on purpose
to show their gnarled and naked arms. Old willow

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trees, washed loose from the shore by the swift current, clung convulsively to the soil with their roots, and formed tiny islands; water-lilies rose and fell on the stream: it was a lovely voyage! And at last they came to the great eel-weir, where the water rushed madly through the flood-gates, that *was* beautiful, thought Ib and Christina.

At that time there was neither factory nor town, nothing but the old building with its poor farm land; few people and few cattle were to be seen; the roar of the water through the sluices, and the cry of the wild duck were almost the only signs of life at Silkeborg. When the boat was unloaded, Christina's father bought a bundle of eels and a sucking pig, which were neatly packed in a basket and placed at the stern of the boat.

Then they set out on their return, against the stream this time, but the wind was favourable, and when they hoisted their sail, they sped along as if they had been drawn by two horses.

When they reached the place where the boatman's companion lived, at a little distance inland, the boat was moored. The two men stepped ashore, having told the children to sit still. But that was just what the children could not do, at least for long together; they must needs peep into the basket where the eels and the sucking pig lay; then they must feel the sucking pig and have it in their hands, and since they both wanted to do so at the same time, they managed to let it fall into the water, and away went the pig down the current. There was a fearful business!

Ib sprang to the land and ran off a little way from the boat. "Take me with you," cried Christina, leaping after him. In a few minutes they were closed in by the thicket, and could neither see the boat nor the

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shore; they ran a little way farther, and then Christina fell down and began to cry.

Ib lifted her up. "Follow me," he said, "our house is up there." But the house was not up there. They wandered on across the dry, rattling leaves of last year, and the rotten branches that cracked under their little feet: suddenly they heard a piercing cry, and stood still to listen—it was the scream of an eagle echoing through the wood, and a horrible sound the children thought it. Before them in the forest large purple blackberries grew in plenty; they could not help stopping to gather some, and they ate the sweet, ripe fruit till their mouths and cheeks were blue. And then they heard the scream again.

"There'll be a pretty to-do about that pig," said Christina. "Come, we will go to our house," said Ib; "it is somewhere here in the wood." They went on farther till they came to a little path, but the path did not lead them home. Darkness came on, and the children were afraid; the strange stillness that reigned around them was broken only by the harsh screech of the horned owl, or of some other night bird; at last the children lay down under a bush; Ib cried, and Christina cried, and when they had cried for a long time, they stretched themselves out on the withered leaves and went to sleep.

The sun stood high in the sky when the children woke; they were cold, but they saw the sunbeams falling warm and bright on to a hill near their sleeping place. Ib thought if they climbed up there, they would be able to see his father's house; but they had wandered far away from the house, into quite a different part of the forest. They climbed the hill, and found themselves looking down into a clear, transparent lake; the fish lay

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basking in the sunshine ; all that the children saw was as new as it was unexpected : but close to them grew a large hazel-nut bush, loaded with the finest nuts. The children gathered them by handfuls and ate the sweet young kernels that were only just formed. The next surprise that befell them was mixed with terror. Out of the bushes stepped a tall old woman with coal black hair, and eyes where the white gleamed out as in the eyes of a Moor. She was a gipsy, and carried a bundle on her back, and a knotted stick in her hand. The children could not always understand what she said ; she drew three large nuts out of her pocket, and said that inside these nuts lay the most beautiful things in the world—they were wishing nuts she said.

She spoke so kindly that Ib plucked up his courage and asked her if she would give him the nuts. She gave them to him, and gathered a pocketful more from the bush.

Ib and Christina stared at the wishing nuts with open eyes.

"Is there a carriage and pair in this nut?" said Ib, doubtfully.

"Yes, yes," said the woman ; "golden carriage and golden horses."

"Then give me that nut," said Christina. Ib gave it her, and the old woman tied it safely in her handkerchief.

"And is there a little handkerchief, like Christina's, in this nut?" said Ib.

"There are ten handkerchiefs," said the old woman ; "fine clothes, stockings, hat, and veil."

"Then I shall have that," said Christina, and Ib gave her the second nut ; the third was a little black-looking thing. "You can keep that," said Christina ; "that is a nice one, too."

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"What is inside it?" asked Ib.

"The very best of all for you," answered the gipsy.

Ib held his nut tight. The woman promised to put the children into the right path, and they walked on farther; certainly she led them in the very opposite road from the one they should have taken, but do not let any one accuse the old gipsy of wishing to steal the children.

In the heart of the wood they met the forest ranger; he knew Ib, and by his help the two children reached home again. Everybody had been in great distress about them, and all was forgiven and forgotten, although they certainly deserved a scolding at the very least; first, because they had dropped the pig into the water; and secondly, because they had run away.

Christina went home to her father's on the heath, and Ib lived on at the farm on the outskirts of the forest by the old mound. The first thing Ib did on his return was to take out the little black nut from his pocket—the nut which held the very best of all—place it carefully between the door and the hinge, and shut the door to with all his force. The nut cracked readily enough, but there was not much kernel to be seen, only black, moist earth, that looked like snuff; it was hollow or worm-eaten, as one says.

"I thought as much," said Ib. "How could there be room inside for the best of all? Christina will get no more out of her two nuts; neither fine clothes nor a golden carriage."

The winter came on, and the New Year, and several years passed by. At last Ib's confirmation day drew near, and the boy went all the winter through to be prepared by the pastor of the next village. About this time the

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boatman paid a visit to Ib's father, and brought the news that Christina was gone to service, and that it was a perfect godsend for her, that she had fallen into such good hands. Only think ! she was going to the rich innkeeper's at Herning ; wealthy, respectable people ; they lived miles away to the westward, far from Ib and the forest. She would have to help the barmaid ; and after awhile, when she was old enough to be confirmed, the master and mistress would take to her altogether, if she had behaved herself well.

So Ib and Christina bade each other good-bye. "The little sweethearts," people called them : Christina showed him at parting that she still had the two nuts which he had given her when they were straying in the wood ; and she said, too, that she had put safely in her trunk the little pair of wooden shoes which he had carved for her. And then they parted.

Ib was confirmed ; but he stayed on in his mother's home, for his father had died years ago. The young man was clever at his trade, and in the summer his mother had no need to keep a man, Ib could manage the farm alone.

He seldom heard of Christina. Sometimes a chance postilion or eel-seller would bring news of her. She was going on very well in her prosperous home ; and when she was confirmed she wrote a letter to her father, and sent a message to Ib and his mother. In the letter she said that her mistress had given her some new under-clothing, and a beautiful dress. That was certainly a piece of good news.

The following spring there was a knock at Ib's door, and who should it be but Christina and her father, who had come to spend the day ! A conveyance had been running from Herning to the neighbouring parish,

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and Christina had availed herself of the opportunity to come and see her friends. She was as beautiful as a fine lady, and dressed very prettily, in clothes that had been made on purpose for her. There she stood all dressed in her best, while Ib had on his work-day clothes. He could not speak a word, he could only hold her hand fast between his own, but his lips had nothing to say. Christina had, however; and she chattered on without a stop, and kissed Ib at meeting, without ceremony.

"Did you know me again directly, Ib?" she said; but even when they two were left alone together, and he stood, still holding her hand in his, he could only say, "You have grown into a fine lady—and I look such a rough fellow! Oh, how I have thought of you, Christina, and of the dear old times!"

Arm and arm they wandered along the mound and gazed across the river to the heath and the hills overgrown with yellow broom; but Ib said nothing, and yet by the time they parted, it had grown clear to him that Christina must be his wife. Had they not been called sweethearts from their babyhood? It seemed to him that they were already a betrothed pair, although neither of them had spoken.

They had only a few hours to spend together; Christina was obliged to go back to the neighbouring village, because the coach to Herning started so early in the morning. Ib and her father walked with her as far as the village: it was a lovely moonlight night, and when they reached the village Ib could not loose Christina's hand, his eyes brightened, and the words which came so slowly from his lips rose from the very depths of his heart. "If you have not grown too proud, Christina," he said, "and if you can make your-

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self happy in my mother's cottage as my wedded wife—we two will marry—but we can afford to wait a little.”

“Yes, indeed; we can afford to wait a long time, Ib,” she said, pressing his hand as he kissed her at parting. “I can trust you I know; and I think I am fond of you, but I must sleep upon it.”

They parted, and as Ib walked homewards with the boatman he told him that he and Christina were as good as engaged; and the boatman said he had expected as much. He went home with Ib, and spent the night at the farm. Not another word was said about the engagement.

A year went by, during which time two letters were exchanged between Ib and Christina. “True till death,” was written at the end. One day the boatman arrived with a message from Christina, which he seemed to find a difficulty in delivering: but the burden of it was that Christina was going on very well—famously indeed; she had grown into a very pretty girl, with plenty of admirers and suitors—her master's son was staying in the house, he had a good situation at some office in Copenhagen, and he was very fond of Christina. She was not averse to him either, and his parents made no objection. But Christina felt uneasy about Ib; she was afraid he thought too much of her, and so she was almost resolved to give up her good prospects, the boatman said.

At first Ib did not speak, but he turned as pale as death; he shook his head, and said at last, “Christina must not give up anything for me.”

“Well, then, write as much to her—just a few lines,” said the boatman.

And Ib sat down to write, but the words would not come at his call; he crossed them out, and tore up sheet

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after sheet, and on the following morning his letter was ready. This is what he wrote :—

“ I have read the letter you sent to your father, and I see from what you say that you are doing very well, and may do better. Ask your own heart, Christina ; weigh well what lies before you if you take me for your husband ; I have not much to offer you. Do not think of me or my condition, but of your own eternal welfare. You are bound to me by no promise ; and if you have bound yourself in your own heart, I set you free. May every happiness fall to your lot, Christina ! God will know how to comfort me.

“ Ever, your true friend,
“ Ib.”

The letter was despatched, and Christina duly received it.

In the middle of November the banns were put up for her in the little church on the heath, and in Constantinople, where the bridegroom lived ; and she went with her mother-in-law to Copenhagen to be married, for her lover could not leave his business for a second long journey into Jutland. On her way Christina took leave of her father ; very little was said on the subject to Ib, and he asked no questions.

He had grown very silent and thoughtful, his old mother said, and perhaps that was why he often thought of the three nuts which he had received from the old gipsy. Christina had chosen the two which contained fine clothes, and a golden carriage ; that had all come true—she would find all that in the capital—her wishes would be fulfilled. To Ib the nut had promised nothing but black earth—“ the best of all for him,” as the gipsy

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said—yes; true enough, that would be fulfilled also. Now he understood what the woman meant. In the black churchyard mould, in the silent grave, it would be best of all for him to lie.

Years passed away; not so very many, but very, very long, Ib thought. The old folk at the inn were dead, and their son inherited the whole property: many thousand dollars, people said. Now Christina would have her golden carriage and fine clothes in plenty.

In the two following years there came no news of Christina, and when at last her father received a letter, it did not seem to have been written in joy and prosperity. Poor Christina! Neither she nor her husband knew how to make a good use of their wealth; the money did not prosper—no blessing rested on it—none had been sought for.

The heath was bright with bloom, yellow with dying fern, and white with snow; the spring sun shone across the ridge where Ib lived and worked. He was driving his plough across the field, when suddenly the plough-share came in contact with something—a flint, Ib thought. He stooped down to see, and a gleam of shining metal was seen in the furrow.

It was a heavy golden bracelet, which had lain there since the days when the Huns fought together, and filled the land with their graves.

Ib showed it to the pastor, who explained to him its value, and sent Ib and his treasure to the magistrate. The magistrate spoke of it to the President of the Museum, and at length Ib was advised to betake himself and his bracelet to Copenhagen.

“You have reaped from the earth the best that it could give you,” said the President.

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"The best of all," thought Ib; "if this is the best, the gipsy was still right in what she said."

Ib went by the ferry from Aarhus to Copenhagen; to him who had never been further than across his own river, it was like taking a voyage across the ocean.

In Copenhagen he received the value of the treasure; it was a large sum, six hundred dollars! Ib of the heath wandered to and fro in the great city.

The evening before his return home, he lost himself in the narrow lanes of the suburb of Christianshafen. He was alone in the street. At last a little child ran out of one of the wretched houses, and Ib asked her to tell him the way to the street where he lodged; but the little creature only looked at him timidly through her tears. He asked her what was the matter, but he could not understand her answer. As they walked along together the light from a street lamp fell on the child's face, and Ib started—for it was Christina herself, just as he remembered her in his childhood, who stood before him.

He followed the little girl into a poverty-stricken house; ascended the crumbling staircase to a little garret, close under the roof. The air was close and stifling; there was no light, but in a corner of the room some one was breathing heavily. Ib struck a match, and saw that the child's mother lay dying on the wretched bed.

"Can I be of any use to you?" said Ib. "The little girl has brought me here. I am a stranger in the town, but is there no neighbour—no one whom I can call?" He raised the dying woman's head and smoothed her pillow.

It was Christina of the heath!

He had not mentioned her name for many years: he did not care to wake up old sorrows. What report said

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of her was not good; the money which her husband had inherited had done him harm; he had thrown up his situation, travelled in foreign countries for months together, and on his return had lived in great style and got into debt.

His summer friends and acquaintances said of him that he had squandered his money like a madman. One morning his body was found in the canal.

Christina herself felt the touch of death at her heart; her youngest child, born in misery, lay in its grave; and now the mother was waiting for death in the squalid garret. In her childhood she might have lived through the sorrow; but since then she had been accustomed to luxury and splendour. It was her eldest child, her little Christina, suffering from cold and hunger, who had led Ib to the bedside.

"My trouble is that I am leaving this poor child," she gasped. "When I am dead, what will become of her?" She could say no more.

Ib struck another match, and lighted the piece of rushlight on the table; the flame lit up the wretched chamber.

He looked at the little girl, and thought of Christina in her youth; for her sake he could learn to love the child. The dying woman looked at him, and her eyes dilated. Did she know him? He could not tell, for no word crossed her lips.

In the forest, by the river Gudenau and the heath, the air was heavy and damp; the heather had lost its glory of colour; autumnal storms whirled the yellow leaves into the river and across the heath to the hut where the boatman once lived. Strangers lived there now; but by the mound, sheltered by lofty trees, stood the farm-house,

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newly painted and restored. A bright turf fire burned on the hearth, and within the pleasant room was the sunshine of two childish eyes, the bird-like music of red, childish lips. Life and joy filled the house; Christina was there at last; she sat on Ib's knee; he was to her father and mother all in one, for her own parents had



vanished out of her life as dreams will vanish from the hearts of children, and of older people too.

Ib dwelt in peace; a wealthy man in his happy home. Christina slept in the churchyard at Copenhagen.

Her life had ended in poverty and wretchedness. Ib had gold; he had steered his life's-boat safe to port;—and he had Christina too.

The Shadow.



IN hot countries the sun has such power that it burns the inhabitants till their skin is as brown as mahogany: and in the hottest land of all, as black as a negro's. In this story you will only hear about the hot countries. A learned man had gone thither from a colder climate, and thought that he could walk about the city just as if he were at home. But he was soon obliged to alter his opinion: he found that he, and all sensible people must content themselves with staying indoors, with closed blinds and shutters, so that all the houses looked as if they were shut up and deserted by their owners. The narrow street in which he lived was so built that the sun shone down on it morning and evening too; it was really intolerable! The stranger from the northern clime was a clever young man: but he felt now as if he were penned inside a glowing oven: his health failed; he grew thin, his very shadow dwindled and became smaller than it used to be. At last the sun took it away from him altogether, and kept it till after sunset. It was a pleasure to see it then; as soon as a light was brought into the room the shadow stretched itself along the wall and up to the very ceiling, as if it were trying to get back a little life into its weakened limbs. The learned man stepped out on to the balcony to stretch himself too; and when the stars rose in the clear lovely

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sky he seemed to live again. In these countries every house has its balcony, and at this hour every balcony was filled with people thirsting for the cool air, for one must breathe, even if one is used to being burnt as brown as mahogany. There was life enough then in street and balcony. In the street, tailors and cobblers, by which we mean all kinds of people, brought out tables, chairs, and wax lights, and settled themselves down to their nightly songs and gossip. Gay carriages rolled swiftly by; mules, tinkling their merry bells, trotted nimbly along—"ring-a-ting-a-ting!" Church bells chimed in every direction—the dead themselves were borne to their graves amid chanting and music—yes: the streets were busy enough in the evening. And yet the house which stood opposite to the learned man's balcony was always silent. It was evident that some one lived there, for flowers stood on the balcony in the bright sunshine, and where there are flowers, there must be some one to attend to them. So that some one must live there. Towards evening the door would be slightly opened, but not until it was too dark to see into the room. Strange, mysterious music sounded faintly from the house; the learned man thought it extremely beautiful; but then he admired everything he saw in the hot countries, and wished for no change, except for a little less sun. The stranger's landlord said he had no idea who had taken the opposite house; and as to the music, he himself thought it exceedingly poor. "It sounded," he said, "just as if some one were continually practising the same piece, and never was able to get through with it. 'I shall manage it yet,' the player seemed to fancy; but for all that, he never did manage it, let him play as long as he would!"

One night the stranger suddenly awoke: he always

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slept with his door open; the wind blew aside the curtain, and it seemed to him that the opposite balcony was filled with a strange and wonderful radiance. The flowers glowed like flames of fire, and among them moved a tall, beautiful maiden: the light fell around and over her so that she, too, dazzled the stranger's eyes; for they were scarcely open yet from their first sleep. With one leap he sprang from his bed on to the balcony, but the maiden and the glorious light had vanished, the flowers glowed no longer, though they stood there lovely and fragrant as ever. The sweet, weird music rang out clearly from within, and steeped the listener in longing dreams. It was like some sorcery: who could live there? And which was the entrance? Towards the street, and towards the narrow lane at the back, the house stood closed in on each side by shops; the owners could not always slip through unperceived.

One evening the learned man was sitting on his balcony: a light was burning close behind him, so that his shadow fell naturally upon the opposite house. There it lay among the flowers on the balcony, and when the stranger moved, the shadow moved also.

"I think my shadow seems the only living thing about the place," said the learned man. "See how it coils itself among the flowers! The door is not quite closed; the shadow ought to be able to glide in and look round; then he could come back and tell me what he has seen. Yes; that would be making yourself useful," he said to the shadow, half in jest. "Be so good as to go in yonder. Well, are you going?" And he nodded to the shadow, who nodded back in return. "Come, go along, but don't stay away altogether." The stranger rose, and the shadow rose also; the stranger turned away, and if any one had been there to see, he

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would have seen that the shadow slipped through the half-open door of the house just at the moment when the stranger re-entered his room and let the curtain fall behind him.

The next morning the learned man went out to get his cup of coffee and read the papers. "What is the meaning of this?" he cried, as he stepped into the sunshine. "Why, I have no shadow! Then he really did go away last night, and has not come back again. How exceedingly vexatious!"

He was extremely annoyed: not so much on account of the shadow, as because he knew that there was a story about a man who lost his shadow: everybody knows the story, and now, if the learned man were to mention his own case to any one, people would say that he was an imitation; and he did not care that they should say such a thing of him. He, therefore, kept the whole affair quiet, which did credit to his good sense.

In the evening he went out into the balcony and placed a light behind him, for he knew that every shadow likes to have his master in front of him as a shelter, but he could not entice him out. He made himself short, he made himself long, but no shadow was there, and none came out. He cried, "H'm! h'm!" but all in vain.

It was very tiresome; but everything grows so fast in hot climates, that in the course of a week the learned man saw, as he stepped into the sunshine, that a new shadow was beginning to grow out of his heels, so that the roots must have been left in. In three weeks he had a tolerable shadow, and when he was about to set out on his return to the north, his shadow was so long, that he could easily have given half of it away.

When the learned man returned home he wrote books

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on all that is good, and true, and beautiful in the world. Meanwhile the years flew by.

One evening he heard a faint knock at his study-door. "Come in," he said; but no one entered. He opened the door. Before him stood a man, so extraordinarily thin that he started in surprise. The unknown was elegantly dressed, and was evidently a distinguished person.

"With whom have I the honour of speaking?" said the learned man.

"Exactly as I thought!" exclaimed the stranger. "I felt sure you would not know me, I have become so substantial. I look just like a man. You, doubtless, never thought of seeing me in this position? Do you not recognize your old shadow? I daresay you made up your mind that I should never return. I have been getting on extremely well since I was with you; indeed, I have prospered in everything, and if I choose to purchase my freedom from service, I have the means of doing so."

He played with a handful of costly trinkets hanging from his watch-chain, and fingered the heavy gold chain he wore round his neck; diamond rings glittered on every finger. And all were genuine!

"Well! I cannot recover myself," said the learned man. "What does it all mean?"

"No ordinary thing," answered the shadow. "But you are not an ordinary person yourself; and what I am you know well, since I have followed in your steps since my childhood. As soon as you found that I was sufficiently formed to go out into the world on my own account, I took my own path, and I am now in a really brilliant position. But I felt a kind of wish to see you again before you die, and to revisit this neighbourhood.

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One is always attached to one's native land. I know you have taken another shadow; now, have I anything to pay to him, or to you? Just let me know."

"Is it really you?" exclaimed the learned man. "It is too astonishing. I would not have believed that a person could one day meet his old shadow as a man."

"Pray let me know what I owe you," said the shadow. "I should not like to remain in any one's debt."

"Why do you speak so?" said the learned man. "What debt can there be between us? You are as free as air for me, and I am rejoiced at your good fortune. Sit down, old friend, and tell me how it has all come to pass, and what you have seen in the hot countries—and in the opposite house."

"Certainly, I will tell you," said the shadow, seating himself; "but you must promise me that you will never mention to any one, wherever you may meet me in the town, that I was once your shadow. I am thinking of marrying; I have more than enough to support a family."

"Never fear," said the learned man. "I will tell no one who you are. Here is my hand—a word is enough between man and man."

"Between man and shadow," answered the shadow, in spite of himself.

But it really was wonderful to see how much of a man he had become! He was dressed in black, with polished boots, and a crush hat which could be pressed together till no one could tell which was brim and which was crown; not to speak of what we already know—trinkets, and chains, and diamond rings. Yes; the shadow was very well dressed, and perhaps that was what made a man of him.

"Now I will tell you," said the shadow, setting down

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his polished boot as firmly as he could on the shadow of the learned man which lay like a poodle at his feet.

He did this either from insolence or in the hope that the shadow would cleave to his heels. But the shadow lay still and listened intently. He was very anxious to hear how to get free and raise himself to his master's level.

"Do you know who lived in the opposite house?" said the shadow. "It was Poesy—the most beautiful maiden in the world. I stayed there three weeks, and that is as much as if one lived three thousand years and read all the fine things that have ever been written and sung. For I can say with truth that I have seen and that I know everything."

"Poesy!" cried the learned man. "Yes, she is often found haunting great cities. Poesy! I saw her for one short moment, but my eyes were dulled with sleep: she stood upon the balcony radiant as Aurora: her flowers were living flame. Oh! tell me more—you were on her balcony—you went through the door—and then——"

"Then I found myself in the antechamber," said the shadow. "You kept looking across from your room. There was no light, I was in a kind of half'twilight; but another door was open leading to a suite of rooms. Beyond them it was dazzlingly bright: the glitter would have killed me if I had pressed forward at once to the maiden. But I was cautious, and took time: it is always the wisest course."

"And what didst thou see then?" said the learned man.

"I saw it all—and I will describe it. But first—it is really not from pride on my part—as a free man, possessing the gifts which I do—not to speak of my

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high position and ample means—I really wish you would not say *thou* to me.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the learned man. “It is an old habit, and difficult to break through. But you are quite right, and I will remember it. But now tell me what you saw.”

“All that was to be seen,” said the shadow. “I saw it clearly, I know it all.”

“What was it like inside the sacred rooms? Was it like a consecrated temple—or like the silent groves? Was the place like the starry night overshadowing the watcher on a lonely mountain peak?”

“It was all there,” said the shadow. “I did not go to the inmost recess; I stood where I was in the dusk—but I appreciated and felt it all perfectly. I have dwelt in the home of Poesy!”

“What, what *did* you see? The gods and heroes of old time? Lovely angel-children telling their dreams?”

“I tell you that I was there—and consequently you must naturally understand that I saw all there was to be seen. If you had been there you would not have remained a man, but I became one. I learned my inner being, my innate gifts, the relationship in which I stand to Poesy. Formerly, when I was with you, I did not think of these things; but, if you remember, I was often extremely tall at sunset and sunrise; while by moonlight I was more perceptible than yourself. I did not understand it all then; but in the antechamber it was revealed to me—and I became a man. I came forth perfect; but you were no longer in the hot countries. I felt ashamed to appear as a man in the condition in which I then was; I wanted good boots, clothes—in a word, the whole ~~varnish~~ by which one recognises a man; and I hid

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myself—I know I can entrust this to you, you will not print it in a book—I hid myself under the cookmaid's petticoat; the woman little thought whom she was sheltering. It was night when I went out; I ran along the street by moonlight, I stretched myself out on the top of the wall, and that tickled my back agreeably; I ran up and down, looked in through the highest windows, and through the roof where no one else could creep, and I saw what no one ever saw or ought to see. It is a wicked world. I should never have wished to become a man, if I had not seen that it confers a kind of power and dignity. I saw the most incredible scenes between parents, husbands and wives, and the 'sweet innocent children.' I saw what no other man could see, and yet what they all long to know—their neighbours' misdoings. If I had started a newspaper, it would have found readers; but I wrote straight to the man himself, and a perfect panic of terror spread through every city where I came. They were extremely frightened at me, and extremely fond of me. The professor made me a professor; the tailor made me a suit of clothes and keeps me well provided; the overseer of the mint struck coins for me; the women called me good-looking—and thus I became the man I now am; and now good-bye. Here is my card, I live on the sunny side of the street, and am always at home in rainy weather." And the shadow took his leave.

"That was a queer thing," said the learned man.

Years passed by, and the shadow came again.

"How are you going on?" he asked.

"Alas!" said the learned man; "I write of the good, the true, and the beautiful; but no one cares to read of them. I am losing heart; it preys upon my mind and spirits."

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"Don't let it do that," said the shadow. "I am growing stout and portly, and that is what one should aim at. You don't understand the world, and you are making yourself ill—you should travel. I am going a tour this summer; will you come with me? I want a travelling companion; will you come with me in the capacity of shadow? It will be quite a pleasure to me, and I will pay all travelling expenses."

"Are you going to make a long journey?" asked the learned man.

"As it happens," said the shadow. "A journey will set you up. Will you be my shadow? you shall have all expenses paid."

"But really that is too outrageous," said the learned man.

"It's the way of the world," said the shadow, "and so it always will be." And he took his leave.

Things turned out ill with the learned man. Sorrow and care pursued him, and all that he wrote of the good and beautiful was to the majority of men as pearls thrown before swine.

At last he fell ill. "You really look like a shadow," people said to him; and the learned man shivered from head to foot, for he had his own thoughts about that.

"You must travel to some watering-place," said the shadow, who again paid him a visit. "There is nothing else left for you. I will take you with me for old acquaintance' sake. I will pay travelling expenses, and you shall describe the journey, and amuse me on the road. I am going myself to a place of the kind; my beard does not grow as I could wish, that is a kind of disease, and I must have a beard. Come, be reasonable; accept my offer, and let us start like old comrades."

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And they started on their journey. The shadow was master now; and the master shadow. They drove, rode, and walked together—before, behind, and beside each other, just as the sun happened to fall. The shadow always managed to secure the place of honour; but the learned man did not find it out, for he had an unselfish heart, and was of a kind and simple disposition. One day the master said to the shadow, "Since we are become travelling companions and have grown up together, shall we not drink brotherhood together and call each other *thou*? It sounds more cordial."

"What you have just said," replied the shadow, who was now in point of fact the master, "was kindly spoken and well meant; I will answer it just as straightforwardly. You, as a learned man, know how wonderful nature is. There are men who cannot endure the smell of brown paper, it makes them ill. Others feel a thrill through their very marrow if they hear the scraping of a nail against a pane of glass. Now I have a similar feeling when I hear you address me as *thou*; I feel as if I were crushed to the earth, as I was in my first situation with you. You see it is just a feeling—not pride. I cannot allow you to say *thou* to me, but I will willingly say *thou* to you; so you will have half your wish granted."

So from that time the shadow called his former master *thou*. "It's rather cool," thought the learned man, but he had to put up with it.

They arrived at a fashionable watering-place, and found many foreigners there; among them was a king's daughter. She was very beautiful, but suffering from extreme sharpness of sight, a most tiresome disorder.

She found out in a moment that the new arrival was quite a different person from all the rest. "They say he

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is come here to cultivate his beard," she said; "but I know the real reason. He cannot cast a shadow."

Her curiosity led her to enter into conversation with the new-comer on the promenade. As she was a king's daughter she was not obliged to stand on ceremony, so she said right out, "Your disease is this; you cannot cast a shadow."

"Your royal highness must be rapidly regaining health," said the shadow. "I know that you suffer from too keen a sight, but this time your perception has failed you. I have an extraordinary shadow. Do you see that person who always accompanies me? Other men have ordinary shadows, but I do not like commonplace things. It is very usual to have one's servants better dressed than one's self, and I have had the fancy to dress my shadow up as man. You see I have even given him a shadow. It costs a great deal, but I like something out of the common way."

"What?" cried the princess, "can it be that I am recovered? This is the best watering-place in existence, I know; the waters have wonderful properties. But I am not going away just now, as it is beginning to be amusing; this foreign prince—for a prince he must be—pleases me extremely. I hope his beard will not grow, or else he will be away again directly."

At night in the large ball-room the shadow danced with the princess.

She was light, but he was lighter still; she had never had such a partner before. She told him where she came from, and he knew the place well: he had been there once when the princess was from home; and he had looked through the palace windows on the lower and upper storeys too. He had learnt many wonderful things, so that he could let fall hints which surprised the

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princess beyond measure. She thought he must really be the cleverest man in the world; and she felt a great respect for his knowledge; and when she danced with him the second time she fell in love with him, as the shadow soon found out, for she looked him through and through. The next time she danced with him she was very near telling him so; but she was cautious, and thought of her kingdom and her future subjects. "He is a clever man, which is one good thing; and an excellent dancer, which is another good thing; but has he solid information? That is just as important. He must be examined." She immediately asked him a difficult question which she could not possibly have answered herself, and the shadow made a wry face.

"You cannot answer me," said the princess.

"I learned all that when I was a child," said the shadow; "I believe that even my shadow by the door yonder would be able to answer you."

"Your shadow?" said the king's daughter; "that would be very remarkable."

"I do not say decidedly that he can," said the shadow; "but I almost believe so. He has followed me for so many years and learned so much from me. Yes, I believe he could answer it. But will your royal highness allow me to mention that he is so ridiculously desirous of being taken for a man, that if he is to be kept in good temper—and he will not answer unless he is—he must be treated just as if he were a man."

"I like that," said the king's daughter.

She went up to the learned man as he leant against the door, and talked with him of the sun and moon, of the green woods, of men near home and far away. The learned man answered cleverly and well.

"What a man he must be to have such a shadow!"

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thought the princess. "It would indeed be a blessing to my land and people if I chose him. And I will."

They soon arranged matters—the shadow and the king's daughter ; but no one was to know of the engagement till she returned home.

"No one ; not even my shadow," said the shadow ; and he had his special reasons for that.

They travelled on to the country over which the princess reigned.

"Listen to me, friend," said the shadow to the learned man. "I am now as happy and prosperous as any one can be, and I should like to do something for you. You shall live with me at the palace, drive out with me in the royal carriage, and have a hundred thousand dollars yearly ; but you must allow yourself to be treated by me and every one else as a shadow, and never say to any one that you have been a man, and once a year, when I sit in the sun on the balcony, you must lie at my feet as a shadow should. For I may as well tell you that I am going to marry the princess, and to-night is the wedding."

"No ! that is going too far," said the learned man. "I will not—cannot do it. That would be deceiving the whole country and the princess herself ! I shall tell her all ; that I am a man, and that you are a shadow, only that you wear men's clothes."

"No one will believe you," said the shadow ; "be reasonable, or I will call in the guard."

"I am going straightway to the princess," said the learned man.

"But I am going first," said the shadow, "and you are going to be put under arrest." And so indeed he was, for the guards believed the one whom they knew the princess was going to marry.

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"You are trembling," said the princess, as the shadow entered her room. "Has anything happened? You are not going to be ill on our wedding day?"

"I have just passed through the most fearful experience which can happen to a man. Only think—ah! a poor, weak shadow's brain cannot bear much—only think, my shadow has gone mad: he thinks he is a man, and that I—just imagine it!—am his shadow."

"That is dreadful," said the princess. "He is locked up, of course?"

"Of course. I fear he will never recover."

"Poor shadow!" cried the princess. "He is very unhappy. It would be a real kindness to release him out of his misery; and really, when I consider how eager the masses are in our day to take up the cause of the weak against the strong, it seems to me requisite that he should be put quietly out of the way."

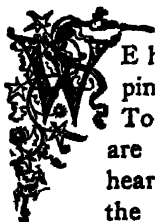
"That seems harsh," said the shadow, trying to sigh—"he was a faithful servant."

"You are a noble character," said the princess, and she bowed before him.

That night the whole city was illuminated, and the cannon thundered out "Boom! boom!" The soldiers presented arms. It was something like a wedding. The princess and the shadow went out on the balcony to show themselves to the people and receive another Hurrah!

The learned man heard nothing of all this splendour, for he had been already put to death.

The Bond of Friendship.



WE have just taken a little journey, and we are pining already for a longer one. Whither? To Sparta, to Mycene, to Delphi! There are hundreds of such names which stir the heart with a thrill of longing. One rides up the narrow mountain pass, through thicket and tangled brushwood; the solitary traveller looks like a whole caravan. Beside him rides his dragoman; a horse carries on his pack-saddle portmanteau, tent, and provisions; a couple of armed officials follow as escort and defence. No hotel, with soft down beds, awaits him after his fatiguing journey; the tent is his only roof amid the savage beauty of the scenery round him; the dragoman cooks the pillau for the evening meal; swarms of stinging gnats surround the tent; it is a wretched night, and the morrow will lead him over the swollen river. Sit firm to the saddle, or you will be washed away.

And what is the reward for all these hardships? The greatest of all rewards, for Nature reveals herself in all her grandeur; every spot is rich in historic memories. The poet finds his theme, the painter his inspiration, but neither can reproduce the charm of reality which thrills the lonely traveller's heart.

I have tried in a few short sketches to present a tiny spot in Athens to my readers; and yet how colourless is the picture I have traced! How faintly it images the

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spirit of beauty and sorrow which breathes from the fair Hellenic land, and which the traveller can never forget !

The lonely shepherd on yonder rock could probably give with greater clearness the charm of his native Greece, by telling one of his simple tales, than I by all my sketches and descriptions.

So let it be. We will be silent while the shepherd speaks and takes a simple, kindly custom for his theme.

THE SHEPHERD'S STORY OF THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP.

“ Our home was built of clay, but its door posts were columns of polished marble, which had been found close to the spot where it was built. The roof reached nearly to the ground. It is discoloured and ugly now ; but when it was first built it was overgrown with laurel and oleander brought from beyond the mountains. The narrow rocky pass, by which the house was closed in, rose on either side towards the sky and caught the floating clouds upon its jagged peaks. I never heard the voice of a singing bird, or saw the peasants dance to the sound of the pipe. The place was sacred as of old, its name recalls the past. Delphi ! The gloomy mountains were veiled in snow. Parnassus, highest of all, glowed the longest in the rose tints of the setting sun. The brook beside our house rises in the mountain ; it too was sacred once ; but now the ass disturbs its clearness with his feet, though the stream shakes itself free and wins back its purity. How well I remember every spot of its deep, sacred solitude ! Fire burned within the hut and bread lay baking in the glowing embers. When the snow lay piled up so high before our door that we could scarcely force it open, my mother would be gayer than her wont ; she would draw me to

ANDERSEN'S TALES.

her knee, kiss my forehead, and sing the songs which our Turkish masters had forbidden to be heard. She sang—

“On the peak of Olympus, in the gloomy pine wood, was an old stag; his eyes were heavy with tears; red, green, and pale blue tears. A roebuck passed by. ‘What ails thee that thou weepest red, green, and pale blue tears?’ ‘The Turk is come into our city; he has blood-hounds for the chase—a goodly pack.’ ‘I will drive them over the islands,’ said the roebuck, ‘over the islands into the deep sea.’ But before sunset the roebuck was slain, and the stag was hunted to his death.”

“A tear lay on my mother’s long lashes as she sang, but she bent down over the bread in the ashes. Then, I clenched my fist and cried, ‘I will slay the Turks.’ And my mother sang in answer, ‘I will drive them over the islands into the deep sea. But before sunset the roebuck was slain and the stag was hunted to his death.’

“Days and nights passed by, and we lived solitary in our hut; then came my father, and I knew that he would bring me shells from the Gulf of Lepanto, or perhaps a knife, keen and polished. This time he brought us a little child, a little naked girl wrapped up in a sheepskin, which was all the little one possessed in the world, except three silver coins which gleamed from her black hair. As she lay in my mother’s arms my father told us that the Turks had slain the child’s parents; he told us tales that filled our hearts with dreams the whole night through. My father himself was wounded, my mother bound up his arm; the wound was deep, and the sheepskin stiff with blood. The little girl was to be my sister; was not that happiness? My mother’s eyes were not softer than hers. Anastasia—

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that was her name—was to be my sister; for my father and hers were bound together by an old tie which is common among us. In their youth they had sworn brotherhood, and the fairest and most virtuous maiden of the country had hallowed their bond. I had often heard of the strange, beautiful custom.

“The little one was now my sister; I carried her in my arms; I brought her flowers and wild bird's feathers; we drank together of the streams which flowed from Parnassus, and her head rested against mine under the laurel-grown roof while my mother sang, many a night, of the red, green, and pale blue tears. But as yet I did not understand that the sorrows of my own people were mirrored in these tears.

“One day there came to us three Frankish strangers; their dress was not like ours: their beds and tents were packed on horses, and more than twenty Turks accompanied them. They were friends of the Pacha, and had received letters of credit from him. They were only come to see our mountains; to climb Parnassus in storm and sunshine, and to scale the heights round our hut.

“We had no room for them within; and, indeed, they would not have endured the smoke which curled along the ceiling and forced a passage through the low doorway. Their tents were set up near to our hut, and there they roasted lambs and birds, and poured out sweet, strong wine, of which the Turks dared not partake.

“When the travellers continued their journey I went with them for a little distance, carrying Anastasia, wrapped up in a goat's skin, on my shoulder. One of the strangers placed me against the rock and made a picture of us just as we stood. It was like life, and we looked like one figure. I had never thought of that before—but we really were one. Anastasia was always

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in my arms or on my shoulder, and whenever I dreamed, it was she who came to me in my dreams.

"Two nights later there arrived other strangers; rough men armed to the teeth with knives and muskets, Albanians, my mother called them. They only stayed a short time; little Anastasia sat on the knee of one of them. When they were gone away she had only two silver coins in her hair instead of three. They rolled up tobacco in strips of paper and smoked it, while they disputed about the road they ought to take.

"At last they were agreed, and my father went with them a little way. Soon afterwards we heard the sound of musket shots; soldiers forced their way into the hut and took my mother, Anastasia, and myself prisoners. We had harboured brigands, they said; my father was with them as their guide, we must come to be tried. Outside our hut we saw the corpses of the robbers, and we saw my father lying dead. I cried till I fell asleep, and when I awoke we were in prison, but the place was no worse than our own hut; they gave us onions and musty wine from an old tarred cask: we fared no better at home.

"I do not know how long we stayed in prison, but many days and nights passed by. When we were set free, it was the time of the Easter festival, my mother was weak and ill, and we wandered slowly on, for she could not walk fast. I carried Anastasia on my shoulder, and thus by slow degrees we made our way towards the Gulf of Lepanto. When we reached the town we entered a church hung with beautiful pictures painted on a background of gold. They were pictures of angels, and very lovely, but none of them were lovelier in my eyes than our little Anastasia. In the centre of the church lay a coffin filled with roses. 'See, there lies the true

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Rose of Sharon, the Lord Jesus,' said my mother, and the priest cried from the altar, 'Christ is risen!' Then all the people greeted each other joyously; lighted tapers were given to all the worshippers; Anastasia had one, and I had one also. Outside the church, groups of men were dancing to the sound of the pipe, while the women busied themselves with roasting the Paschal lamb. One of them invited us to the feast; I sat down by the fire, and a dark-eyed boy, older than myself, threw his arm round my neck, and kissed me, with the greeting, 'Christ is risen!' Then for the first time I saw Aphtanides.

"My mother was clever at making nets for the fishermen, and, as they were in great request, we earned plenty of money, and stayed a long time by the sea—the beautiful sea that tastes like tears, like the tears which the stag wept, red, green, and pale blue.

"Aphtanides could manage a boat well; I and Anastasia sailed with him many a time; the boat glided over the water as a cloud sails across the sky. When the sun went down the hills were bathed in violet mist; they rose, one above another, and highest of all stood Parnassus, white with snow. In the sunlight the peak glowed like molten gold; the light seemed to come from itself; and long after the sun had set it gleamed through the blue, vaporous air; sea-birds flapped the waves with their white wings, but for them, it would have been as silent as our rocky pass in Delphi.

"Anastasia and I lay in the boat looking at the stars which shone above us clearer than the tapers in the church. They were the same stars that shone over our little hut at Delphi. Sometimes it seemed to me that I was at home again. Suddenly a splash was heard, the boat gave a lurch, and, with a shrill cry, I saw that

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Anastasia had fallen overboard. Quick as thought, Aphtanides sprang in after her and held her up to me: we wrung the water out of her clothes, and remained out in the sunlight till they were dry, for we did not wish any one else to know of the fright she had given us. From this time Aphtanides could claim a part in the life of our little foster-sister.

"The summer came and burnt up the leaves upon the trees; I pined for our fresh mountain air, and for the rippling streams; my mother too felt homesick, and we at length set out on our return. What stillness—what solitude! We walked through the flowering thyme, the sun had scorched its blossoms, but had not taken away their fragrance. Not a shepherd, not a hut met our sight; and only the sudden flight of a shooting star showed that there was yet life in the sky. I do not know whether the clear blue air glowed with a light of its own, or whether it was the starlight, but we could trace clearly the outline of every peak. My mother lighted a fire and roasted some onions for our supper; and then we slept out among the scented thyme, and feared neither the terrible Smidraki* nor the wolves and jackals. My mother was with us, and that seemed enough to ward off any danger.

"We reached our home at last: the hut was a heap of ruins. Some women helped my mother to build another; and in a few days the walls rose from the earth and were covered with a roof of olive branches. My mother worked at a kind of basket work; weaving cases of bark and leather to hold the wine flasks, and

* The Greeks believe in a monster called Smidraki, which is born from the unopened entrails of a slaughtered sheep.

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I tended sheep for the peasant priests.* Anastasia and some little turtles were my playfellows.

"One day we received a visit from our beloved Aphtanides; he had been longing to see us, and he stayed with us two whole days.

"In a month's time he came again to bid us good-bye: he was going in a vessel to Corfu and Patras, and he presented my mother with a large fish. He had a great deal to talk about; not only of the fishermen by the Gulf of Lepanto, but of the ancient kings and heroes who once reigned over Greece as the Turks do now.

"I had often seen a rose-bush put forth a tiny bud which grew larger day by day, until suddenly, before one thought of it, it opened into a lovely rose, crimson and glowing. So it befell with my sister Anastasia. She had bloomed into a lovely maiden; I, too, had grown a strong, tall lad; the wolf, whose skin lay upon my mother's bed, was slain by my own hand.

"Years passed away. One evening Aphtanides came in, tall, slender as a reed, strong and sunburnt; he kissed us all, and told us tales of the great sea, of the fortifications at Malta, and of the Egyptian pyramids. His stories sounded like the legends of the priests. I listened to him with wonder and reverence.

"'How much you know!' I exclaimed to him. 'What tales you have to tell!'

"'None so beautiful as the one you told me,' he answered. 'You told me once about the beautiful old

* A peasant who can read is often consecrated priest. The other peasants address him as "most holy sir," and kiss the ground on which he walks.

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custom of the bond of friendship. Brother, let us observe it also ; let us go to the church and swear brotherhood, as your and Anastasia's father swore it. Your sister is the best and fairest maiden in the land ; she shall consecrate us. No nation has such grand old customs as we Greeks.'

"Anastasia blushed like a rosebud, and my mother kissed Aphtanides.

"The little church stood about a mile from our house, where a few trees lend their shadow to the rocky soil ; a silver lamp burned perpetually before the altar.

"I was dressed in my best clothes ; my scarlet jacket fitted close to my figure, and the white tunic fell in graceful folds. The tassel on my fez was of silver, and in my girdle gleamed knives and pistols. Aphtanides wore the blue dress of a Greek sailor, a silver medal of the Virgin hung round his neck, his embroidered scarf was as costly as a noble's. All the world could see that we were prepared for a festival. We entered the lonely church, where the sunset fell upon the burning lamp and the pictures on their golden grounds. We knelt upon the altar steps, and Anastasia stepped before us. A long white robe was clasped round her beautiful waist ; round her fair neck was a necklace formed of silver coins, row above row. Her dark hair was wreathed round her head, and partly hidden by a small net of gold and silver, which had been found within the temple. No Grecian maiden ever wore a lovelier ornament ; her face glowed, her eyes shone like twin stars.

"All three of us knelt in silent prayer ; and then the maiden spoke. 'Will you be friends in life and death ?' she asked us. .

"'We will,' was our reply.

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“ ‘Will you remember, whatever happens, that your brother is a part of yourself—your secret, your happiness is his also? Constancy, self-sacrifice, all within you belongs to him as well as to yourself?’ ”

“ ‘We will,’ answered Aphtanides and myself.



“ She joined our hands together and kissed us on our foreheads. We knelt once more in prayer. Then the priest stepped forward from behind the altar and pronounced a blessing over us, and the song of the choir rose up and filled the church. The bond of friendship was tied. When we rose from our knees we

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saw our mother passionately weeping in the church porch.

"How happy we were in our little hut, and by the Delphic mountain torrents! The day before Aphtanides' departure he and I sat together, silent and thoughtful, on the rocky slope. His arm was round me; we spoke of our unhappy country, and of the patriots whom we could trust. The thoughts of our souls lay clear before us. I took his hand in mine. 'One thing you must hear from me: as yet it has been secret between myself and God. My heart is filled with love; a love stronger than my love to my mother and to thee.'

"'Whom do you love?' said Aphtanides, faintly, and his face and neck grew red as fire.

"'I love Anastasia,' I replied. His hand trembled in mine, and his face turned pale as death. I saw and understood it all. I think my hands were trembling too as I bent forward and kissed his brow. 'I have said no word to her,' I whispered; 'she may not love me. Think, my brother; I have seen her daily, she has grown up at my side, one with my life.'

"'And she shall be thine,' he cried. 'Thine—I cannot and will not lie to you. I also love her; but to-morrow I go away, and next year, when we meet again, she will be your wife. Is it not so? I have money, and it shall be her dowry; nay, I will have it so.' We rose and descended the path in silence; it was late at night when we reached the hut.

"Anastasia held the lamp toward us as we entered, my mother was absent. She looked sorrowfully at Aphtanides. 'To-morrow you will leave us,' she cried; 'and my heart is sad.'

"'Sad?' he cried; and his voice shook with a grief as deep as my own. I could not speak, but he seized

THE OLD HOUSE.

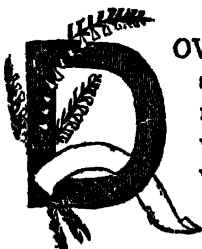
her hand and said, 'Our brother loves you—and he is dear to your heart. See! his silence reveals his love.'

"Anastasia trembled and burst into tears; I saw and thought of no one but herself: I threw my arms round her and said, 'Yes, I love you.'

"She pressed her lips to mine and clasped her hands round my neck; the lamp fell to the ground: darkness closed round us, and round the heart of Aphtanides.

"Before daybreak he left us. He had given my mother all his gold for us. Anastasia became my betrothed, and a few days later saw her my wife."

The Old House.



DOWN yonder in the street there once stood a very old house. On its wooden frontal was carved the date of the year when it was built, and round the date was a carved wreath of tulips and hop-tendrils. The date showed that the house was three hundred years old; over every window was a motto written in curious old text, and faces, carved in wood, grinned oddly at the passers-by. The upper storey projected far beyond the lower; under the roof was a leaden gutter, ending in a dragon's head. The rain-water ought to have run out of the dragon's mouth, but as there was a hole in the spouting, it ran out of his body.

All the other houses in the street were new and fresh-looking, with large window panes and smooth walls.

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It was clear that they wished to have nothing in common with the old house. They probably thought, "How long is that tumble-down place to be left standing, to the disgrace of the whole street? The parapet projects so far that it blocks up the view from our windows; we cannot see anything that is going on on the other side of the street. The staircase is as broad as the staircase of a castle, and as high as if it were going to lead up to a steeple. The iron palisading looks exactly like the railing round a family vault, and there are brass knobs upon it. It is really too absurd."

A row of new houses stood opposite the old house, and they thought exactly as the others did; but at the nursery window of one of them sat a rosy-cheeked little lad, with merry blue eyes, and he was very fond of the old house. He liked it by moonlight, and in the daytime also; and when he sat looking at it, he used to fancy how the street must have looked three hundred years ago when all the houses had gable roofs, open staircases, and gutters that twisted and coiled like dragons and sea snakes.

It was a house that seemed made to be looked at, and its master was an old man who walked about in leathern knee-breeches and a coat with large brass buttons. He wore a wig; any one could tell in a moment that it was a real wig. Every morning an old man went to set the house to rights and receive orders; but, with that exception, the old man in the leathern knee-breeches lived alone in the house. Sometimes he came to stand at the window, and then the little boy nodded to him. The old man nodded back, and so they made acquaintance and became great friends, although they had never spoken to each other. But that is not at all necessary.

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The little boy heard his parents say, "The old man over yonder is very well off, but he is quite alone."

On the following Sunday the little boy wrapped up something in a piece of paper, went up to the door of the old house, and said to the servant who waited on the old man—

"I say! will you give this to the old man from me? I have two tin soldiers, and I have brought him one, for I hear that he is all alone."

The old porter smiled, nodded, and carried the tin soldier into the house. A message was sent across soon afterwards to know whether the little boy would like to come over and pay the old man a visit. His parents gave him leave, and so he went to pay a call at the old house.

The brass knobs on the balustrade shone bright as gold; any one would have thought that they had been polished up on purpose to receive the visitor. And it seemed as if the wooden trumpeters—for on the door there were carved wooden trumpeters standing up inside tulips—were blowing away with all their might. Their cheeks looked rounder than ever. "Tra-ra! tra-ra!" they blew; "the little boy is coming—tra-ra! tra-ra!" And then the door opened. The hall was hung round with old portraits of knights in armour and ladies in silken dresses; the armour clanged, and the silks rustled. Then came a staircase which went a good way up, and then a little way down, and then one found one's self on an old tottering balcony. Through the myriad holes and rifts the long grass grew green; courtyard and walls were all overgrown with moss and grasses; the place looked like a garden, but it was only a balcony. Within it stood curious old flower-pots, with asses' ears and faces; the flowers

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grew just as it pleased them. One pot was filled with pinks ; with the green leaves, that is ; one shoot crowding the other, and saying, quite clearly, "The air has fanned me, the sun has kissed me and promised me a little flower by next Sunday—by the very next Sunday."

Then they came into a room where the walls were hung with leather inwrought with gold flowers.

"The leather will stay
When the gilding's away,"

said the walls. And there were tall chairs with narrow, carved backs and arms.

"Sit down," they cried. "Oh dear ! how I creak ! I shall have a fit of the gout like the old cupboard. Gout in my back ! oh dear !"

Then the little boy came to the room where the old man sat. "Thank you for the tin soldier, my little friend," he said ; "and thank you for coming to see me."

"Thanks—thanks," or "Creak—creak," said all the pieces of furniture.

There were so many of them that they almost got in one another's way to see the little boy.

On the wall there hung the picture of a beautiful lady, young and bright-looking, but dressed in the fashion of years gone by, with powdered hair and stiff brocade. She said neither "Thanks" nor "Creak," but she smiled down with her sweet eyes on the little boy, who immediately said to the old man, "Where did you get that from ?"

"From the old curiosity dealer's over yonder," said the old man. "He has a great many pictures. No one took any notice of this one, for all her friends are

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dead and buried. But I knew her years ago; she has been dead now nearly half a century."

Under a glass shade, below the portrait, was a nosegay of withered flowers; they were certainly half a century old, at any rate they looked it. The pendulum of the great clock swung to and fro, the hands turned round, and everything in the room grew older every minute, but no one noticed it.

"They say at home that you are always alone," said the little boy.

"Oh!" said the old man; "old memories and all that they bring with them come and visit me, and now you are come, too. I get on very well."

He reached down a book of pictures from the bookshelves; there were pictures of processions, and old carriages, such as one never sees now-a-days; soldiers, like knaves of clubs, and townsfolk with waving banners. The tailor had a banner on which were two lions holding up a pair of shears; on the shoe-maker's banner there were no boots, but a two-headed eagle; everything must be arranged in twos at a shoe-maker's, so that one can say, "That is a pair." Yes, it was something like a picture-book.

The old man went into the next room to fetch out apples, nuts, and preserves. It was glorious to be in the old house.

"I cannot bear it," said the tin soldier, who was standing on the mantelpiece; "it is really too lonely and dull here. When one is accustomed to family life, it is impossible to get used to this place. I cannot bear it. The days are long enough, but the nights are still worse. It is quite different from your house over the way; where your father and mother were always in cheerful conversation, and the children laughed and

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romped all day long. You don't know how lonely it is ! Do you think the old man ever gets any kisses, or Christmas trees ? He will get nothing but a grave. I cannot bear it ! ”

“ You should not look at the dark side of everything,” said the little boy. “ I think everything is very beautiful here ; and then the old memories and all that they bring with them come and pay visits.”

“ Yes ; but I never see them. I should not know them if I did,” said the tin soldier. “ I cannot bear it.”

“ But you must,” said the little boy.

Then the old man came back, with a pleasant face, and brought the most delicious preserve and fruits, so that the little boy forgot all about the tin soldier.

The little boy went home delighted with his visit. Days and weeks passed by ; a great deal of nodding was carried on between the two houses, and at last the little boy came over for a second visit.

The carved trumpeters blew, “ Tra-ra ! tra-ra ! the little boy is coming ! ” The swords and armour clinked, the silks rustled, the gilt leather recited its verse, the old chairs had the gout in their backs. It was just like the first time, for one day was just like another in the old house.

“ I cannot bear it,” said the tin soldier ; “ I have wept tears of tin. It is too dismal to be borne. I would rather go to the war and lose my arms and legs. That would be a change at least. I cannot bear it. Now I know what you mean by old memories and all that they bring with them. I have had a visit from mine, and I shall not mind if I never have another. I was ready to throw myself down from the mantelpiece. I saw you all as clearly as possible in your house across the street. It was a Sunday morning : you children

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stood round the table singing your morning hymn. You were standing reverently with folded hands, and your father and mother were as devout as ever. Just then the door burst open and in came your little baby-sister, Maria; she is not two years old yet, I know; and she always begins to dance when she hears music of any kind. So she began to dance, but she could not keep time any way, the notes were so slow. She stood first on one leg and then on the other; and bent down her head, but it was all of no use. You all stood very serious, though it was hard work not to laugh; but I laughed till I fell off the table and raised a lump which I carry about with me now, for I certainly had no business to laugh. Well, all this, and everything else that I have experienced, comes back to haunt me now; and those are the old memories and all that they bring with them. Tell me—do you sing still on Sundays? Tell me something about little Maria. And how is my comrade, the other tin soldier? He is a happy fellow! I can *not* bear it."

"You are given away," said the little boy, "and you must stay. I wonder you don't see that."

The old man came in and brought a casket in which there were several things to look at; rouge pots, and scent-boxes, old cards, large and gilt-edged, such as one never sees now. Several caskets were opened; and so was the piano. Inside the lid there were landscapes painted; it sounded faint and shrill when the old man played upon it. He nodded to the picture which he had bought at the curiosity shop, and his eyes brightened.

"I want to go to the war! I will go to the war," cried the tin soldier as loud as he could; and he threw himself down from the mantelpiece.

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Now where was he? The old man searched, and the little boy searched—but he was really gone. "I shall find him," said the old man; but he never did find him. The floor was full of cracks and holes, and the tin soldier had fallen into one of them, where he lay as in an open grave.

The day wore away, and the little boy went home. Weeks passed by; the windows were frozen over, and he was obliged to breathe on the panes and make a peep-hole whenever he wanted to look at the old house. The snow lay white in all the scrolls and carved work, it covered the doorsteps as if no one were at home. And no one was at home. The old man was dead.

That evening a hearse stopped before the door, and the old man was placed inside it in his coffin; he was to be buried in his family vault out in the country. No one followed him to the grave, for all his friends were dead; the little boy kissed his hand to the coffin as the hearse drove away.

A few days later there was an auction held in the old house; and the little boy, as he sat at his nursery window, saw how the old knights, the ladies, the flower-pots with the asses' ears, the chairs, and the old cupboard were carried away. One went one way, and one another. *Her* portrait, which had been bought at the old curiosity shop, went back to its old place, and there it remained, for no one cared anything about the old picture.

In the spring the house itself was pulled down.

You could see from the street right into the room with the leathern hangings; they were all hanging in strips by this time. The grass had grown wild over the crumbling balcony and rotten beams.

"A good riddance," said the neighbours.

THE OLD HOUSE.

A beautiful house was built further back, with large windows and white stone walls, and in front, where the old house itself had stood, was a pretty garden. The walls were overgrown with climbing plants, and in the front was an iron palisading, with a handsome gate. It looked very grand, and the passers-by used to stand at the gate and peep through. The sparrows settled by dozens on the wall, and chirped and twittered together, but they did not chatter about the old house, because they did not remember it. Many years had passed since then—so many, that the little boy had grown into a man, a good and clever man, who filled his parents' hearts with joy. He had just married, and moved into the new house with the pretty garden. He and his wife were walking in the garden; he stood by her side while she bent down to plant a little field flower which she thought was very pretty. She planted it with her little white hand, and pressed down the earth with her fingers. "Oh! what was that?" Something pricked her finger; something that stood up sharp above the soft earth. It was—now just think—it was the tin soldier; the very one which was lost at the old man's, and which had fallen down through dust and rubbish and lain buried for years in the earth!

The young wife wiped the soldier clean with a green leaf, and then with her white handkerchief; and the strong, fragrant scent on the handkerchief made the soldier feel as if he were recovering from a fainting fit.

"Let me see him," said the young man, laughing. He shook his head. "No, it can scarcely be the same; but he reminds me of something that happened to a tin soldier which I had when I was a boy." And then he told his wife the story of the old house and its master; and of the tin soldier which he had given him because

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he was all alone. Tears stood in the young wife's eyes as she thought of the lonely old man.

"I feel sure it is the same tin soldier," she said. "I shall keep it, and think of what you have just told me. You must show me the old man's grave."

"I do not know where it is," he answered ; "nor does any one else. All his friends were dead : no one attended to the grave, and I was a little boy."

"How lonely he must have been !" she cried.


"Lonely indeed !" said the tin soldier ; "but it is delightful to find that one is not forgotten."

"Delightful !" said a voice close at hand. No one but the tin soldier saw that the voice came from a rag of the old leathern tapestry which had now lost all its gilding. It looked like nothing but moist earth, but it still had its own opinion of itself, and let it be known too—

"The leather will stay
When the gold's gone away."

But the tin soldier did not agree with that.

The Jewish Maiden.

N the charity school there sat among the other children a little Jewish maiden ; she was a good, intelligent little girl, clever at her lessons, and generally at the head of her class. But from one class she was shut out altogether. She might not join in the religious instruction, for the school was a Christian school.

While the class was going on she read, learned her geography lesson, or worked her sum ; but that was soon done, and when she knew her lesson off by heart she let

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the book lie open before her, while she listened to the teacher's words—listened more earnestly than any of the other children.

The teacher became aware of her attention. "Read your book, Sarah," he said, gently, but her dark eyes were fixed upon his face; and once when he asked a question she was the only one who answered. She had listened, understood, and pondered in her heart all that he had taught.

Her father, a poor, honest man, had made it a condition when he sent his daughter to the school that she should be excluded from all lessons on the Christian faith. But as it would have caused a confusion, or perhaps made the other children jealous, if she had had a holiday while the lesson was being given, she had always remained in the room. Now that could not be allowed any longer.

The teacher went to her father and begged him either to take his daughter away or to let her become a Christian. "I can no longer remain an idle spectator of the child's earnest face, of her longings to learn the words of our holy gospel," said he.

The father burst into tears. "I am not learned in our law," he said, "but Sarah's mother was firm in her faith as a daughter of Israel, and I promised her on her dying bed that the child should never be a Christian. I must keep my oath—it binds me as if it were a vow to my God."

And the little Jewish child was taken from the Christian school.

Years passed away.

In a humble family, in a small provincial town, there lived as servant a poor girl of the Hebrew faith. Her hair was black as ebony, her eyes were dark as night, but soft with the liquid lustre one sees in the dwellers in

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Eastern climes. It was Sarah. The expression in the face of the maiden was the same as in the face of the child when she sat upon the form at school and listened thoughtfully to the words of the Christian teacher.

Every Sunday the organ sounded from the church, and she heard the echoing hymns; they floated across the street to the house where the Jewess moved diligent and faithful among her daily work.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day," sounded in her heart the voice of her law; but her Sabbath was passed in hard work for her Christian mistress. "Does God indeed reckon by days and hours?" she asked herself; and as the thought grew clearer in her soul, it became a pleasure to her to have an hour for prayer on the Christian Sunday. For while the others were at church she sat alone, and the solemn sounds of praise and prayer which penetrated to her poor kitchen hallowed even that lowly room. Then she took out her Old Testament, the guide and treasure of her people. All that her father and her teacher had said to her when she left the school was fresh in her mind; the vow made to her dying mother, that she would never forsake the faith of her people or receive Christian baptism, was still sacred to her. The New Testament must always be a sealed book to her, and yet she had learned so much from it—echoes of gospel teaching mingled with the distant memories of her childhood.

One day she sat in the corner of the sitting-room; her master was reading aloud; and she could listen with a clear conscience, for it was not the New Testament from which he read. It was an old history book, and he had chosen the story of a Hungarian knight taken prisoner by a Turkish pacha, who yoked him with his oxen to a plough and drove him on, with mocking words

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and cruel blows of the whip, till he was brought near to death. The knight's true wife sold all her jewellery and mortgaged castle and land; his friends raised large sums of money, for the ransom was enormously high. At length, however, it was procured, and the knight was rescued from slavery and disgrace. Weak and fainting he reached his home. Before long there rang out a fresh call to arms against the enemy of Christendom. The wounded knight heard the summons, and it left him neither rest nor peace. He caused himself to be lifted on to his war-horse, his cheeks won back their old colour, his strength seemed to be renewed, and he rode forth to battle and to victory. And the very pacha who had driven him, harnessed to his plough, now stood his prisoner in his castle dungeon. Before an hour had passed away the knight stood before the captive pacha.

"What fate, think you, awaits you now?" he asked him.

"I know well," replied the pacha; "retribution."

"Yes," said the knight, "the retribution of a Christian. The law of Christ teaches us to forgive our enemies and to love our neighbours, for God is love. Go hence in peace: return to your home. I give you back to your dear ones. Henceforth be merciful to those who suffer."

The captive burst into tears. "How could I dream of the possibility of such forgiveness?" he cried. "Shame and torture seemed to be my inevitable doom, and to escape them I have taken poison. In a few hours I must die. There is no way of deliverance. Let me die in the faith of Christ." His prayer was granted.

This was the legend which the Jewess heard out of the old history book; all the household listened with

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sympathy and interest; but she—the silent Jewish maid—felt her heart beat and her eyes fill with tears. Once more she felt as she had done when she was a little child at school. The loveliness of the Christian faith filled her heart; tears rolled down her cheeks.

But the words of her dying mother rose in her heart. “Do not let my child become a Christian,” and with them blended the voice of her sacred law, “Honour thy father and mother.”



“I am not received into the Christian communion,” she said. “They mock at me, and call me ‘Jew girl.’ The neighbours did so last Sunday as I stood before the open church door, and watched the flame of the tapers on the altar, and listened to the singing of the people. Yes, I have felt the power of Christianity ever since I sat as a child on the form at school

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—a power like the sunbeam's—and, though I shut my eyes to the light, I cannot shut my heart. But I will not grieve my mother in her grave; I will not read the Christian Bible. I have still my father's God, and I will cleave to Him."

Years passed away.

The master died. His widow fell into poor circumstances; the servant was to be turned away. But Sarah would not leave the house; she was their



support in time of need. She kept the home together, working early and late to earn their daily bread. No friend or relation came to their aid; the widow lost her health, and was at length unable to leave her bed. Sarah worked, and nursed the sick woman by day and night; she was mild and gentle as an angel from Heaven in the sorrowful house.

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"There is the Bible on the table yonder," said the sick woman ; " read to me a little, for the nights are so long, and I thirst to hear God's Word."

Sarah took the book, opened it, and read aloud ; tears filled her eyes, but they glowed as she read, and a light rose in her heart.

"Mother," she cried, "your child may not receive the Christian baptism. You have so willed it, and I obey your will. In this world we are united, but beyond this world our union shall be in God. He leads us through death into the life beyond. He stoops to earth and to suffering, that we may rise to heaven and to His joy. I understand it now. I do not know how I have learned, but it is through Him—through Christ !"

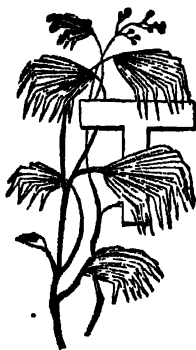
She started as she spoke the blessed name. A thrill as of a fiery baptism shook her whole frame. Her limbs trembled, and she sank fainting to the ground, weaker than the sufferer on the bed.

"Poor Sarah !" cried the neighbours ; "she is quite worn out with work and sitting up at night."

They sent her to the hospital, and there she died. From the hospital she was carried to her grave : not to the Christian resting place, *there* was no welcome for the Jewish maid—but to a lonely grave outside the wall.

But God's dear sunlight, as it streams upon the Christian burial-ground, falls also on the Jewish grave, and when the church re-echoes to the Christian hymn, the tones float above the outcast maiden : and for her, too, shall sound one day the resurrection call in the name of Christ her Saviour. For did He not say to His disciples, "John indeed baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire?"

The Flax.



THE flax was in full bloom. Its pretty little blue flowers were more delicate than the wings of a moth. The sun shone down upon them and the rain sprinkled them; and that was just as good for the flax as it is for little children to be washed and then kissed by their mother. They look all the prettier for it, and so did the flax.

"They say I have come on extremely well," said the flax; "I am grown very tall; I shall make up into a famous piece of linen. How happy I am! I am certainly happier than any one else; I am so kindly treated; the sun cheers me, and the soft, cool rain makes me grow. And now something useful is to be made of me. I am almost too happy!"

"Yes, yes," said the finger-post; "wait a little. You don't know the world; but I do, for I am extremely knotty." And it began to sing, in a plaintive voice—

"Snip-snap Snurre,
Basse Lurre,
The song is ended."

"No, it is not ended," said the flax. "The sun will shine to-morrow, or the rain will fall. I feel that I am growing. I feel that I am in blossom. And I am happy."

But one day some people came up to the flax and

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pulled it up by the roots, which hurt it a good deal. Then it was thrown into some water, as if it were going to be drowned ; and then placed over a fire, as if it were going to be roasted ; and all that was really alarming.

"One can't have things always to their liking," said the flax. "One must expect to go through some trouble if one is to learn anything."

And there was trouble enough in store for the flax. It was soaked, and roasted, and broken, and combed ; it hardly knew at last what was being done to it, till it found itself on the spinning-wheel. Whirr ! whirr ! It was impossible to keep one's thoughts steady.

"I have had a very happy life," said the flax. "One must be contented with the pleasure one has enjoyed in the past. Contented !" And "contented" was all it said when it came on to the weaver's loom, and was made into a beautiful piece of linen. All the flax, to the very last stalk, was used up in this one piece.

"Well, this is wonderful ! I never would have believed it ! What luck I have to be sure ! The finger-post was altogether wrong, with his—

‘ Snip-snap Snurre,
Basse Lurre.’

The song is by no means ended. It is very likely only just beginning. I certainly have had something to suffer, but then see what I have become. How strong and fine I am ; how white and long ! This is much better than being a plant, even when one has blue blossoms. No one attended to me then, and I could only get water when it rained. But now I am waited on, and cared for ; every morning the maid turns me over, and every evening I have a shower bath ; indeed the clergyman's wife preached a sermon about me ! She

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said I was the best piece of linen in the parish. I can never be happier than I am now."

The linen was then brought into the house, cut with scissors, torn into pieces, and pricked all over with needles. All that was unpleasant, but twelve beautiful garments were made out of the piece. They were of that kind which no one cares to mention, but everybody likes to wear. And there was a dozen of them.

"Now, just see!" cried the flax. "Now I am really beginning to be of importance. This, then, was my destination! To be a blessing to all! Now I shall be of use in the world, and that is the truest pleasure. There are twelve of us, and we are yet all one and the same. A complete dozen. What an extraordinary piece of good fortune!"

Years passed by; and they were worn out, they could hardly hold together.

"There must be an end sometime," said the flax. "I should have liked to hold out a little longer, but it is of no use wishing for impossibilities."

It was then torn into small rags and shreds, and thought that all was over; for it was beaten to a pulp, steeped in water, dried, and a great deal more besides—and then it was made into beautiful white paper.

"Well, this is a surprise—a splendid surprise!" cried the paper. "I am finer than ever; and now I shall be written upon. That will be true happiness."

And the most beautiful stories and verses were written on the paper; and there was only one blot. That was really a very rare blessing. And people too listened to the words written; they were wise and good, and helped men to become wise and good also. A blessing lay hidden in the words upon the white paper.

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"This is beyond all I ever dreamed when I was a little flower in the fields. How could I think that I should ever bring pleasure and wisdom to men? I cannot understand it, and yet it is really the case. God knows that I have done nothing myself, except using what little powers I had for my self-preservation, and yet He leads me on from one blessing to another. Every time when I think to myself, 'The song is ended,' a new and higher life opens before me. Now I shall certainly travel about the world, so that every one may read me. It must be so. It is the only thing at all likely. I have beautiful thoughts now instead of my blue flowers. I am happier than any one in the world."

But the paper did not travel; it was sent to the printer's, and all that was written upon it was printed in a book; or rather, in hundreds of books, which could be sent all over the world, and read by every one. That was much better than if the paper had gone itself, and been worn out before it had got half way.

"Yes, this is certainly the most sensible thing to do," said the paper. "It never occurred to me. I shall stay at home and be held in honour like an old grandfather—and, indeed, I am a grandfather to all those books. Now, something can be made of them. I could never have gone about in that way myself. But the man who wrote the words looked on me as he wrote: every word came straight from his pen to me. I am the happiest of all."

Then the paper was tied up in a bundle and thrown into a tub in the wash-house.

"After a busy life it is good to rest," said the paper. "It is good to collect one's thoughts and think over one's inner life. Now for the first time

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I begin to see what is within me, and to know ones self is the true road to progress. What will become of me now? It will be a step forward. I have learned that. It is always a step forward."

One day all the paper was taken out and thrown on to the fire; it was to be burnt, for it could not be sold to the grocer to wrap up sugar and butter, because it was written upon. The children of the house stood round the fire to see the paper burn, it flamed up beautifully, and then its ashes were sprinkled over with golden sparks that ran to and fro and in and out. One after another died out. The children said the sparks were schoolboys coming out of school, and the last was the school-master: they thought over and over again that the school-master was gone out—but there always came another, and then they said again, "There goes the school-master." So they were always right. They ought to have known where the sparks all went to—we shall know just now—but the children did not know. The whole bundle of paper was thrown on the fire, and it soon burned away. "Ah!" it cried, and broke out into clear flame. It was not exactly pleasant; but the golden flames rose higher and higher—higher than the flax could ever have lifted its little blue flowers; brighter than the whitest linen could ever be bleached.

All the words and letters glowed red, and the thoughts rose up in flames. "Now I am going up to meet the sun," cried a voice from the flames; it seemed as if a thousand voices spake in unison. The flames rose through the chimney, and, finer than the flames, invisible to human eyes, myriad tiny elves hovered above the flames, as many as the blue

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blossoms in the field of flax. They were lighter than the flame from which they sprang, and when that had died away, and nothing was left of the paper but cold black ashes, they danced above it, and wherever their feet fell there arose a tiny spark.

"The children are coming out of school, and the school-master comes the last!" What a pretty sight it was! The children sang round the dead, cold ashes—

"Snip-snap Snurre,
Basse Lurre,
The song is ended."

But the tiny unseen elves said, "The song is never ended. That is the beauty of it. We know it, and that is why we are so happy!"

But the children could neither hear nor understand what they said: and a good thing too, for children ought not to know everything.

A Drop of Water.



Of course you all know what a microscope is? A round piece of glass that makes everything look a hundred times larger than it really is. If you hold it before your eyes and look through it at a drop of water taken out of the pond, you perceive thousands of wonderful animals in the water which you never

A DROP OF WATER.

could have seen without the glass. But there they are; it is no deception. The water looks just like a large plateful of sea-spiders crawling and leaping about. And what a fury they are all in! They tear off each other's arms and legs, and heads and tails, and seem to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

There was once an old man whom people called Kribble-Krabble, because that was his name. He always tried to get the best of everything; and when he could not get it by fair means, he had recourse to the black art.

One day he sat in his room holding his microscope before his eyes and looking at a little drop of water taken out of the gutter. Heavens! how it kribbled and krabbled in the water! Thousands of little creatures were hopping and jumping about; biting, tearing, and destroying each other.

"It is downright horrible!" said old Kribble-Krabble; "why can't they be persuaded to live in peace and quietness? Why can't every one mind his own business?" He thought and thought, but he could not do what he wanted, so he tried magic, as usual. "I'll colour them so that they can be more plainly seen," he said; and he poured in something that looked like a drop of wine, but it was witch's blood, of the finest quality, at ninepence a drop. And now all the curious animals turned pink and looked like savage, naked men.

"What have you got there?" asked another old conjuror. He had no name at all; that was his special distinction.

"If you can guess what it is I will give it to you," said Kribble-Krabble; "but it is not easy to find out, if you don't know beforehand."

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The conjuror with no name looked through the magnifying glass and thought he saw a city full of men running wildly to and fro. It was a horrible sight! One rushed at another; they fought, hacked, struggled, bit, and tore. Those below tried to get to the top, and those at the top were thrust down below. "Look! his leg is longer than mine! Off with it! There is one with a hump—but it hurts him—off it shall come!" And they hacked and thrust him to death because of his hump. One of them sat as still as a girl, and only wished for rest and peace. But they pulled her out, tore her to pieces, and swallowed her.

"That's funny," said the conjuror.

"Yes; but what do you suppose it is?" asked Kribble-Krabble. "Can you make it out?"

"Anybody can do that," said the other. "It is Paris, or some other large city—they are all alike. It is a great city."

"It is a drop of water," answered Kribble-Krabble.

Two Maids.



HAVE you ever seen a maid? I mean what the stonemasons call a maid; a thing with which they stamp down the pavement smooth and firm. That kind of maid is made of wood, and stands on a broad foot with iron vice-pins or ferrules. Its head is narrow, and through its waist is a stout

TWO MAIDS.

stick which serves for its arms. Now you may look at the picture.

Two maids of that kind were standing in the warehouse-yard, among wheelbarrows, handcarts, wood-measures, and spades ; a rumour had reached the whole community that the maids were never to be called maids any more. Hand-rammers was the



new name invented in the stonemason's language for that which in the good old times everybody called maid.

Now there are, we know, independent women in the world ; nurses, teachers, milliners, and dancers who can stand on one leg ; and the two maids considered themselves to belong to this society ; they were maids—and they were by no means willing

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to give up their time-honoured name and allow themselves to be spoken of as hand-rammers.

"Maid is the name of a human being," they said; "but a hand-rammer is a thing, and we will not be addressed as 'Thing'—it is too insulting!"

"My betrothed would be quite capable of withdrawing from his engagement," said the younger. She was engaged to a rammer-log; a machine which drives great stakes into the earth; thus doing on a large scale what the maid does on a small. "He is ready to marry me as a maid, but whether he would do so as a hand-rammer is at the least doubtful, and I do not choose to be rebaptized."

"And I," said the elder, "would sooner have my two arms chopped off!"

The wheelbarrow was of a different opinion; he had a right to speak, for he considered himself a quarter of a carriage, because he went about on one wheel. "I must call your attention," he said, "to the fact that 'maid' is rather common; it is not nearly so select as 'hand-rammer,' or even 'stamper,' which has also been proposed. Now 'stamper' will raise you at once to the rank of seal—and only think of the great seal of royalty which gives a law all its force!—in your place I would certainly give up 'maid.'"

"Never—never!" cried the elder. "I am too old to change."

"You have perhaps never heard of what is called the European necessity," interposed the worthy wood-measure. "One must learn to yield one's private inclinations to the exigencies of the times; and if the law has been passed that maids are to be called hand-rammers, why, hand-rammers they must be, and

TWO MAIDS.

it is of no use pouting. Everything has its measure."

"Never! , If I must change, I would rather be called Miss—that is a little like maid, at any rate."

"But *I* would rather be chopped to pieces," said the elder.

At last the workmen came up; the maids were driven to work in the wheelbarrow; that was humane treatment, but they were called hand-rammers



all the same. "Ma—!" they gasped, as they were stamped on the pavement. "Ma—!" they very nearly got the whole word out that time, but not quite, and they thought it beneath their dignity to appeal.

But they always called each other "maid," and spoke of the good old times when things were called by their right names, and if one was a maid one was addressed as maid; and maids they remained,

ANDERSEN'S TALES.

for the rammer-log went back from his engagement as had been anticipated. He had set his heart on a maid.

The Happy Family.



THE largest leaf in the whole country is the burdock leaf. If you hold it in front of you it makes a very good apron; and if you hold it over your head it does just as well as an umbrella, it is so very large. A burdock plant never grows alone; where you find one, you find thousands; it is a splendid sight. And this splendour is board and lodging too for the snails. The great white snails—those which grand people used to have served up in a *fricassée* in old times, and eat them, and say, when they had eaten them, "How delicious!" those very snails lived on burdock leaves. And that is why burdock was planted.

There was once an old castle where long years ago white snails were eaten. But the castle was now in ruins, and the snails had died out. Not so the burdock. It grew and throve, and spread till there was no stopping it. It filled the paths, and overran the beds, till it formed a burdock wood. A lonely apple or plum tree was seen here and there,

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

but for them no one would have believed that the place had ever been a garden. It was all burdock from end to end, and among the burdock lived the last of the great white snails.

They were an old couple—so old that they had forgotten their real age long ago; they could remember that there were once a great many more of them, that they were descended from a foreign family, and that the wood had been planted on their account. They had never been outside it, but they knew that there was something else in the world. This other thing was called the duke's castle, and within it snails were boiled till they were black, and then laid on a silver dish. They did not know what happened after that. Neither could they imagine, very clearly what it would feel like to be boiled and laid on a silver dish, but it sounded very grand and aristocratic. They often questioned the cockchafer and the toad and the earthworm on the subject, but they could get no information, for no member of those families had ever been boiled or laid on a silver dish.

The old white snails were the grandest people in the world: so much was certain. The wood stood there for them alone, and the duke's castle had been built simply that they might have a place in which to be cooked and laid on a silver dish.

They lived very quiet and retired; and as they were childless they had adopted a common black snail, and brought him up as their son. But the little fellow would not grow, for he was only a common snail; the old people, however, especially the mother, fancied that he did. When the father snail doubted it, his wife used to beg him to feel

ANDERSEN'S TALES.

the child's shell. He felt it, and owned that she was quite right.

One day it rained in torrents.

"Listen how the rain beats on the burdock leaves," said the father snail; "rum, tum, tum!"

"This is something like a shower," answered his wife. "I can see the water running down the stems. We shall have it very wet here directly. I feel very glad that we have such good houses, and the child has his too. Certainly more has been done for us than for any other creature; it is easy to see that we are the lords of the world. We have houses from our birth, and the burdock wood was planted on our account. I should like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There can be nothing better than this," said the father snail. "I have nothing left to wish for."

"But I have," said his wife. "I should like to be taken to the duke's castle and boiled, and then laid on a silver dish. Our forefathers have always gone there, and I have no doubt it is something quite unique."

"The castle is most likely in ruins," answered the husband, "or the burdock leaves have grown over it so that no one can come out. And there is, after all, no hurry. But you and the boy are so impatient. Didn't he crawl up to the very top of that stalk in three days? It made me quite giddy to look up to him."

"You must not scold him," said the mother; "he is not reckless. He will live to be the very joy of our lives, and what else have we old folk to live for? Have you ever thought how we shall find a wife for him? Do you think it possible that any

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

of our family are still living farther on in the wood?"

"There are very likely plenty of black snails," said her husband; "black snails with no houses; but they are so very common. We can speak to the ants on the subject: they run to and fro as if they had a great deal of business to do. I daresay they know of a wife for the boy."

"I know of the most beautiful in the world," said the ant; "but I hardly think it could be managed, for she is a queen."

"That does not signify," said the snails. "Has she a house?"

"She has a palace," said the ant. "The most splendid ant palace, with seven hundred corridors."

"Thank you," said the mother snail; "our son shall not go to an ant hill. If you know nothing better than that, we will give the commission to the white gnats; they fly about in rain and sunshine, and know the burdock wood from end to end."

"We know of a wife for him," said the white gnats. "A hundred man's steps from here there is a young lady snail who lives alone on a gooseberry bush. She has a nice house and is old enough to be married. It is not far from here."

"Let her come to him," said the old snails; "he has a wood, she has only a bush."

The young lady snail took eight days for the journey, and that showed her high breeding and that she was of distinguished family.

The wedding was then celebrated. Six glow-worms lighted up the feast as well as they could; but it was a quiet wedding, for the old people could not bear much excitement. The mother snail made a most

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beautiful speech at the breakfast, but the father could not speak a word, he was too much overcome. Then they bestowed the whole wood on the newly-married couple, and said, as they had always said, that it was the best thing the world contained, and that if they lived honourable and respectable lives, they and their children would one day attain to the honour of being taken to the duke's castle, boiled, and laid on a silver dish. After the speeches were over the old people crept back into their shells and never came out any more: they slept. The young snails now ruled in the burdock wood and had a very large family. None of them were ever taken to the castle and boiled, so that they concluded that the castle had crumbled into dust, and that all the people in the world were dead. And since no one ever contradicted them, of course they were right. The rain beat on the burdock leaves for their amusement, the sun shone to light up the burdock leaves for their benefit, and they were happy: all the family was happy—inexpressibly happy.



The Story of a Mother.



MOTHER sat by the bedside of her little child; she was very sad, for she feared the child would die. Its eyes were closed; its baby face was white and thin. It drew its breath in deep sighs, and the mother's heart sank as she gazed on the little creature.

Some one knocked at the door, and an old man came into the room; he was dressed in a kind of horse-cloth, for it was winter, and he looked very cold. Out of doors everything was covered with ice and, snow and the keen wind blew sharply across one's face. The old man was trembling with cold, and, as the child seemed as if it were asleep, the mother went to warm some beer for him. He sat down and rocked himself to and fro; the mother sat near him, looked at her child who lay drawing deep, painful breaths, and seized its little hand.

"I shall keep him, shall I not?" she said to the old man. "God will never take him from me."

The old man—it was Death himself—nodded in a strange fashion, which might mean either yes or no. The mother closed her eyes, and the tears ran down her cheeks. Her head was hot and heavy; she had not closed her eyes for three days and three nights, and now she slept. It was only for one minute

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though; she felt an icy chill, and started up shivering. What was that? She looked round on all sides, but the old man was gone, and her little child was gone: he had taken it with him. The old clock in the corner yonder began to give warning, the chains rattled and whirred, the leaden weight fell to the ground with a heavy thud—the clock stood still.

The mother rushed from the house, calling for her child.

In the snowy street sat a woman draped in long black garments. "Death has been in your room," she said. "I saw him hurry away with your little child; he flies more quickly than the wind, and he never brings back what he has taken."

"Tell me the way he went," cried the mother. "Only tell me the way, and I will find him."

"I know the way," said the woman; "but before I tell you, you must sing to me all the songs you used to sing to your child. I am Night. I liked the songs; I have heard them before. I saw your tears when you sang them."

"I will sing them all," said the mother, "but not now. Do not hold me back. Let me overtake him and bring back my child."

But the Night sat mute and still. The mother wrung her hands, and sang the songs. There were many songs, and still more tears. Then the Night said, "Go to the right in the pine wood yonder. I saw him enter it with the little child."

In the heart of the forest two roads met, and the mother did not know which to take. Close beside her stood a blackthorn bush, with neither leaves nor blossom. It was winter time, and long icicles hung on the branches.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER.

"Have you seen Death pass by with my little child?"

"Yes," said the thorn; "but I will not tell you which way he went till you have warmed me against your breast. I am freezing to death. I am turning to a mass of ice."

She pressed the thorn bush to her breast to make it thaw. The thorns tore her flesh, but the bush put forth green leaves and buds in the cold winter night, for a mother's heart is warm. Then the thorn bush told her the way.

She hurried on till she came to a great lake on which there was neither boat nor raft. It was not frozen sufficiently hard for her to walk upon, and it was too deep to wade through. She laid herself upon the ground to try and drink it dry. Any one else would have thought it impossible, but the mother hoped for a miracle.

"No, that will not do," said the lake; "let us see if we cannot come to terms. I like collecting pearls, and your eyes are the clearest I have ever seen. If you will cry them out into my depths, I will carry you over to the great hot-house, where Death lives and tends his trees and flowers, every one of which is a human soul."

"What would I not give to win back my child?" said the poor mother. She wept till her eyes sank like two costly pearls to the bottom of the lake. Then the lake lifted her up and bore her across its waves to the opposite shore. Before her stood a wonderful house, miles long; whether it was a mountain with woods and caves, or a castle full of rooms, no one could tell. But the mother could see nothing, for her eyes were wept away.

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"Where shall I find Death, who took away my little child?" she cried.

"He is not come back yet," said an old grey-haired woman, who was watching over the plants in Death's absence.

"How did you get here? Who has helped you?"

"God has helped me. He is merciful, and you will be merciful, too. Where shall I find my little child?"

"I do not know the child, and you cannot see it. Many flowers and trees have died in the night, and Death will soon come to transplant them. You know that every human being has a life tree or flower; they look like other trees and flowers, but their hearts beat. Children's hearts beat also. Take that for your guide; perhaps you can tell the heart-beats of your child. But what will you give me if I tell you what more you must do?"

"I have nothing to give you," said the mother in despair; "but I will go to the end of the world for you."

"I have nothing to do with the end of the world," said the old woman; "but you can give me your long black hair; you know it is beautiful, and it pleases me. You shall have mine in exchange; it is better than nothing."

"Is that all you ask?" she said. "Take it with pleasure." And she gave her her beautiful hair, and received the old woman's snow-white hair in return.

Then they went into the great hothouse where the flowers and trees grew side by side. Delicate hyacinths grew among glass bells and splendid peonies. Water plants grew there also, some fresh and healthy, and others sickly. Water snakes and crabs clung to them and twined round their stems.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER.

Mighty oak trees, palms; and plantains grew among parsley and sweet wild thyme. Every tree and flower had its name; each was a human life. The men and women were still alive, some in China, some in Greenland, scattered all over the world. There were strong trees crushed and dwarfed in narrow pots, and sickly little flowers in rich soil, fenced round with moss. But the mother bent over the little plants and heard their hearts beat; and from among a thousand she recognized the heart-beat of her child.

"This is it!" she cried, bending over a little crocus which drooped over the side of its flower-pot.

"Do not touch the flower," said the old woman, "but place yourself here. When Death comes—and I expect him every moment—do not let him pull up the flower; threaten him that if he does you will pull up some of the others, and he will be afraid. He has to answer to God for every one; none may be pulled up till leave has been granted."

An ice-cold breath sighed through the place, and the blind mother felt that Death was come.

"How did you find this place?" he cried. "How have you been able to reach here before me?"

"I am a mother," she cried.

Death stretched out his long thin hands towards the little flower, but she held it tightly clasped, tightly but tenderly, lest she should bruise the delicate leaves. Death breathed upon her hands, and they sank down powerless and benumbed, for his breath was colder than the icy wind.

"You cannot prevail against me," he cried.

"But God can," she answered.

"I only do His will," he answered. "I am His gar-

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deners; I take up all the flowers, and transplant them in the garden of Paradise in the unknown land. But how they thrive there, and where the land is, I cannot tell you."

"Give me my child back," said the mother, weeping and imploring. Suddenly she seized two pretty flowers, and cried aloud, "I will uproot all your flowers, for I am in despair."

"Touch them not," said Death. "You say you are unhappy, and you would make another mother as unhappy as yourself!"

"Another mother!" said the woman, loosing her hold of the flowers.

"Here are your eyes," said Death. "I saw them shining in the lake and fished them up. Take them back, they are clearer now than they were, and look deep into this well. I will tell you the names of the two flowers you were about to pull up, and you will see what you had nearly done."

She looked into the deep well, and saw the life of one who was a blessing to the world, and spread around him joy and happiness. The other life was filled with pain and care, misery and suffering.

"Both are God's will," said Death.

"Which is the unhappy, and which the blessed one?" she asked.

"I cannot tell you that," said Death, "but one of them is the life of your own child. It was his fate, his future, which you have seen."

The mother gave a cry of terror. "Which is my child's life? Tell me that. Save my innocent child from all this misery. Rather carry it away. Take it to God. Forgive my tears and threats and all that I have done!"



"The angel pointed downwards, through all the confusion."

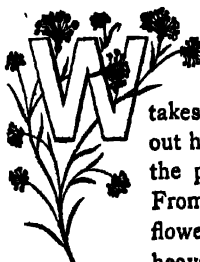
THE ANGEL.

"I do not understand you," said Death. "Do you wish me to give you your child back, or to take it away to the unknown land?"

The mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees, and prayed aloud to God: "Hear me not when I pray against Thy will! Thy will is always best. Oh, hear me not."

She let her head sink on her breast; and Death carried her child to the unknown land.

The Angel.



WHENEVER a good child dies, one of God's angels flies down to earth, takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies to all the places which the child used to love. From every place he gathers a handful of flowers, and then he carries that up to heaven to plant in the heavenly garden.

God welcomes all the flowers, but the one He loves best He touches, and at His touch it receives a voice and joins in the songs of the angels.

This is what an angel was telling a dead child whom he was carrying up to heaven; the child heard it all as in a dream, while they flew swiftly over the houses in the town below, and over gardens filled with lovely flowers.

"Which shall we gather and take with us to heaven?" said the angel.

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A tall rose-bush stood near covered with beautiful pink roses ; but a rough hand had broken the main stem, and the branches, with all their half-opened buds, hung down helpless and dying to the earth.

"The poor rose-bush !" said the child. "Let us take it, so that it may bloom in heaven."

The angel took the rose-bush and kissed the child, who half opened its closed eyes. They gathered some more flowers ; some of them were rich garden flowers ; but they did not leave the despised buttercup or the wild pansies behind.

"Now we have gathered enough," said the child. The angel nodded, but he did not fly straight to heaven. It was night, and all was silent. The angel lingered on in the large town, and hovered over one of the narrow alleys, where heaps of straw, ashes, and sweepings were lying on the ground. There were pieces of broken crockery, rags, old hats, and brick ends ; it was an ugly place.

The angel pointed downwards through all the confusion, to a broken flower-pot, out of which a clod of earth had fallen. The clod was held together by the roots of a withered field flower. It was quite dead, and so it had been thrown out into the street as worthless.

"We will take this one," said the angel ; "I will tell you why, while we fly up to heaven.

"In the dark underground yonder, in the narrow alley, there lived a poor, sickly boy. He had been bedridden ever since he could remember ; and at the best of times he could only get across the room on crutches—that was all. Sometimes in the summer the sunbeams would steal in half way across the floor, and when the poor boy could sit where the light fell, and be shone upon, he would hold up his thin fingers before his face

THE ANGEL.

and let the warmth quicken the blood within them. 'I have been out to-day,' he said then to himself. He knew nothing of the great forest with its beautiful springtide greenery, except that the neighbour's son brought him the first bough of the hawthorn. The boy would hold it over his head and dream that he was wandering among the trees, while the sun shone and the birds were singing. One spring morning the neighbour's son brought him some wild flowers, and among them there happened to be one with a root: so they planted it in a flower-pot and placed it in the window close to the bed. The flower had been planted by a lucky hand; it grew, and blossomed every year. The flower-pot was now the poor boy's garden, his greatest treasure in the world. He watered and tended it, and took care that it should catch every ray of sunlight down to the very last which stole through the low window. The flower grew on in his dreams; it gladdened his eyes, rejoiced his heart, and refreshed him with its fragrance: towards it he turned on his death-bed when God was calling him.

"That was a year ago, the poor boy has now been a year with God, and the flower has stood for a year forgotten by the window: it also is dead now, and lies out in the street among the sweepings.

"And this is the flower which we will take with our garland; for it has given more joy than the richest blossom in the garden of a queen."

"How do you know all that?" said the child.

"I know it well," said the angel; "for I was the sick boy who could only move about on crutches—and this is my flower."

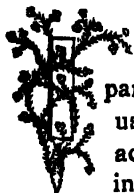
Then the child opened his eyes wide, and looked up into the angel's beautiful, radiant face, and in the same moment they found themselves in heaven, where all is

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joy and peace. God pressed the dead child to His heart ; and gave him wings so that he could fly hand-in-hand with the other angels. And God welcomed all the flowers, but He touched the poor withered field flower, and it received a voice and sang with all the angels. They hovered round the throne in great circles, some near, some farther away to endless space—but all equally happy.

And all sang the angels' song ; small and great, the good, happy child, and the poor dead flower which had lain among the sweepings in the squalid, narrow street.

A Picture from the Fortress Wall.



Tis autumn. We stand upon the ramparts and look across the quiet sea. Beneath us the ships sail by, and the Swedish coast across the Sound towers high above the waves in the evening sunshine. Behind us the wood stands out clear against the sky ; lofty trees surround us, the yellow leaves flutter down from the branches. Below, close to the rampart walls, is a gloomy building closed in by an iron railing. The whole place looks cramped and dismal ; but it is still gloomier behind the iron barred walls, for there are the cells of the convicts.

A ray from the setting sun falls into one of the cells ; for the sun shines on the evil and on the good. The hardened criminal casts a sullen glance on the cold sunbeam. A little bird flies on to the barred window, for the birds sing to the just and to the unjust. It only chirped a short "Tweet ! tweet !" but it stayed upon the

A PICTURE FROM THE FORTRESS WALL.

iron bar, fluttered its wings, pecked out a feather, and plumed, and smoothed the tiny feathers of its neck and breast. The captive watched him, and a gentler look stole over his face. A thought rose within his heart; he could not fully explain it even to himself; but he knew that it had something to do with the sunbeam, and the scent of the spring violets underneath the fortress wall.



The hunter's horn was heard, sweet and clear, and the bird flew away in terror. The sunlight slowly faded, and it was dark once more in the prison cell, and in the sinner's heart. But yet, for an instant, the sun had shone. The bird had sung there.

Sound on, clear, lovely notes of the horn! Sound on, the air is mild, the sea rocks gently as the cradle of a sleeping child.

The Snowdrop.



It was winter time; the air was cold; the wind was keen; but inside one's home it was warm and cosy enough. And the flower was inside her home; she lay curled up in her bulb deep in the earth beneath the snow.

One day the rain fell; the drops sank through the snow, trickled down to the bulb of the flower, and told her about the sunny world above. Soon after the sunbeam pierced through the snow and touched the bulb, so that it began to flutter and stir within.

"Come in," said the flower.

"I can't," answered the sunbeam. "I am not strong enough yet to open the door. When the summer comes I shall be strong."

"When will the summer come?" said the flower every time the sunbeam reached her. But the summer was still a long way off; the snow lay on the ground, and the water froze at night.

"What a time it is!" said the flower. "What a weary time it is! I must stretch myself; I must crack and split; I must shoot up and say good morning to the summer—that will be a happy time!"

THE SNOWDROP.

And the flower stretched itself, and pressed against the bulb which the water had already softened, the snow and earth warmed, and the sunshine stirred with life. She shot out under the snow; a green and white blossom on a slender stem, guarded by close thick leaves. The snow was cold, but the light shone through it so that it was easy to break through, and then the sunbeams had more power than they have down below.

"Welcome! welcome!" sang the sunbeams, as the flower rose higher and higher out of the earth. The beams stroked her and kissed her till she opened wide—a flower as white as snow with pale green stripes. She hung her head in humble joy. "Lovely little flower," sang the sunbeams. "How fresh and delicate you are! You are the very first—the only one! You are our first love. You speak of summer—beautiful summer over all the world. The snow will melt. The cold wind will be chased away. We shall reign; and then you shall have friends in plenty; syringas, laburnums and roses—but you are the first and tenderest."

There was a joy for the snowdrop! It seemed as if the air was full of singing; as if the light thrilled through every leaf and stem. There stood the flower in all her beauty, with her white dress and green ribbons—speaking of summer.

But the summer was still far off; clouds covered the sky; the keen wind blew.

"You have come too soon," cried the wind and storm. "The power is still in our hands, and you shall feel it. You ought to have stayed quietly at home, and not come and make all this display before the proper time."

How bitterly cold it was! The days passed by without one sunbeam. It was weather to make a poor little flower freeze in two. But the snowdrop was stronger than she

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looked ; she was strong in her happiness and in her faith in the coming summer. Had she not believed in it long ago by the very beatings of her own heart ? and had not the sunbeam confirmed all her hopes ? She stood there trustfully in the snow, in her white dress, bending low as the flakes fell thick and the icy wind rattled by.

"Break !" it cried—"break and die ! What did you want out of doors in the storm ? Why did you let yourself be enticed ? The sunbeams have made a fool of you. Now you reap the consequences—*Summer-fool !*" *

"*Summer-fool !*" they repeated in the cold grey dawn. "*Summer-fool,*" cried a troop of merry children in 'the garden ; "here is one ! how pretty, how pretty it is ! It is the first, the only one !"

The kind words warmed the flower as if they had been sunbeams. In her joy she did not feel that she was broken off ; she lay in a child's warm hand, was kissed by childish lips, and carried into the pleasant room. There soft eyes gazed upon her, she was placed in cool, refreshing water. The flower thought that she had suddenly come to the middle of summer.

The eldest daughter of the house, a pretty little maiden, was just confirmed ; and her best friend, who was studying hard to pass his examination, was confirmed also. "This shall be my summer-fool," she cried, taking up the little flower out of the glass. She folded it up in some scented paper, on which were written verses all about the flower, with its promise of summer. The paper was folded and sealed like a letter and sent through the post ; inside, it was as dark as the bulb ;

* *Summer-fool* is a metaphorical name given to snowdrops, on account of their rashness in blossoming so early.

THE SNOWDROP.

and the flower had to take a journey in the mail bag, and be stamped and squeezed. It was not pleasant, but it did not last for ever.

The journey was over. The young student read the letter, kissed the flower, and placed it with the letter in a casket ; there ~~is~~ lay among many more letters ; but it was the only flower, "the first—the only one," as the sun-beam used to say. It was a pleasure to reflect on that.

She had plenty of time to think of it all. The summer passed by, and the winter too, and it was spring once more when she came again to the light. But the young student was no longer pleased to see her ; he seized the letters roughly and threw them on the fire ; the flower fell to the ground. Certainly she was flat and dry, but why should she be thrown on to the floor ? It was better, of course, than being thrown into the fire, where the verses and letters were blazing away. What had happened ? Something that happens often enough ; the flower and the young lady had made a summer-fool of the student ; in the spring the maiden had chosen another friend.

The next day the sun shone down on the flattened snowdrop, which looked as if it were painted on the floor. When the housemaid came in to sweep the room she thought it must have fallen out of a book, and she placed it inside one of the books on the table. Once more the snowdrop found itself among verses, printed ones too, which are much grander than written ones—at least a great deal more money is spent upon them.

The book was left for years upon the shelf ; at last some one took it up and began to read. It was a good book ; a book of verses written by the fine old Danish poet, *Ambrose Stub*, and well worth reading. The man who had taken it from the shelf turned over the leaf ;

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"There is a flower," he cried, "a snowdrop—a summer-fool! It must have been put there on purpose. Poor Ambrose! He too was a summer-fool, and wrote before the world was ready for him. He too was forced to suffer from the cold wind, to be imprisoned in the houses of his patrons, to stand like a flower in cold water, and to fade in rhymed verses. A summer-fool! and yet the first, the only, the ever-fresh poet of his day! Lie there as a symbol, you little snowdrop—you have been placed there on purpose."

The snowdrop was put back in her place. She felt proud and glad that she lay in the beautiful book as an emblem of him who had written it. The flower understood it all after her fashion, just as we understand things after ours.

That is the tale of the snowdrop.





Thick-headed Jack.



N the heart of the country stood an old manor-house ; and in it lived a country squire who had two sons. The sons were both so clever that they had more brains than they knew what to do with ; and they both wished to marry the king's daughter. She had given notice publicly that she would marry the man who knew best how to give ready answers and to phrase his words properly.

• The two brothers had spent a whole week in preparing themselves for the wooing ; that was the

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longest time allowed to them, and it was of course sufficient, for they were very well grounded, and every one knows how useful that is. The eldest knew by heart the whole Latin dictionary, and every column of the local daily paper for the last three years. He could say them right off, and did not mind at which end he began. The youngest had studied the laws of the corporation and knew them by heart; so that he thought his wit would be able to season any debate on State affairs. And he could embroider braces very nicely with flowers and flourishes, for he had taste and knew how to use his fingers.

"I shall get the princess," they cried both together; and their old father gave each of them a beautiful horse. The one who knew his Latin dictionary and the daily paper received a black, and the other received a white horse; and then they oiled the corners of their mouths, that they might speak the more fluently. All the servants came out to see them mount in the courtyard, and as it happened the youngest brother came up at the same moment. For you must know that the old squire had three sons, but the third was never reckoned in with the others, because he was not clever. Indeed he went by the name of thick-headed Jack.

"Hallo!" cried thick-headed Jack; "where are you off to? Why, you are all in your Sunday best!"

"To the king's palace, to talk over the king's daughter. Don't you know what all the world knows?" and they told him the whole story.

"My gracious! I shall come too," cried thick-headed Jack. The brothers laughed scornfully and rode away.

"Daddy," cried thick-headed Jack, "I must have a horse. If you only knew what a hurry I'm in to get married! If she takes me I'll take her; and if she

THICK-HEADED JACK.

don't take me I'll take her all the same. Have her I will!"

"Hold your foolish tongue!" cried his father. "You shall have no horse. You can't phrase your words properly. You and your brothers are different beings."

"Well," cried thick-headed Jack, "if I can't have a horse I'll take the old goat. It belongs to me in one way or another, and it shall carry me too." So said, so done. He mounted the old goat, dug his heels into its flanks, and off he was down the turnpike road like a storm wind. Hoppity-hop! what a gallop it was! "Here I come," bawled thick-headed Jack, and shouted till the place rang again.

His brothers were riding slowly forwards; neither spoke, lest he should forget the fine things he had learned to say to the princess, for nothing must be left to chance.

"Hallo!" cried thick-headed Jack, "I'm coming. Just look what I've found on the road!" and he showed them a dead crow.

"Blockhead!" cried his brothers. "What are you going to do with that?"

"This crow? Going to give it to the princess."

"You had better!" said his brothers, riding away.

"Hoppity-hop! Here I come! Look what I have found now; it is not everybody who could pick this up from the turnpike road."

The brothers turned to see what he had got now. "Blockhead!" they cried; "it is nothing but an old wooden shoe with the top part broken off. Are you going to give that to the princess?"

"Perhaps I may," said thick-headed Jack. The brothers laughed and rode on; they were now a long way in advance. "Hoppity-hop! Here I come!" cried

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thick-headed Jack. "Look here, better and better. Come, this is splendid!"

"What have you got now?" asked the brothers.

"Oh, I could not tell you," cried thick-headed Jack, "it is *too* grand! Won't she just be pleased—the king's daughter?"

"Oh, fie!" cried the brothers; "why, that is mud, nothing but mud out of the gutter!"

"So it is," cried thick-headed Jack; "the very finest sort, it slips through one's fingers;" and he filled his pocket with the mud.

The brothers galloped away till the sparks flew right and left; they reached the town-gate a whole half-hour earlier than thick-headed Jack. At the gate, all the suitors were numbered according to the time of their arrival, and were placed in rank and file, six in a row. They were so close together that they could not move their arms; and that was done on purpose, for they would very likely have begun to tear each other to pieces just because one was placed before the other.

All the people of the land stood in crowds round the palace windows to see the princess receive her suitors. As soon as any of them entered the hall where she was, his speech went out like a candle.

"He is no good," cried the king's daughter; "out with him!"

At last it came to the turn of the brother who knew the Latin dictionary, but he had forgotten every word in the rank and file; the floor creaked and the ceiling was made of brilliant looking-glass, so that he saw himself standing on his head, and in every window were three reporters and one editor, and all of them were writing down every word that was said, in order that it might come out immediately in the paper and

THICK-HEADED JACK.

be sold in the streets for a penny. It was fearful! and, besides that, the princess had had the fire made up till the room was as hot as a baker's oven.

"It is awfully hot here," said the lover.

"Yes, indeed; but my father is roasting some chickens to-day," said the king's daughter.

"Ahem! ahem!" There he stood like a simpleton. He had never expected such a conversation as this; and he had not a word to say. He would have liked to say something very witty—"Ahem!"

"He is no good," said the king's daughter. "Out with him." And out he had to go. The other brother came in.

"It is awfully hot here!" he said.

"Yes, indeed: we are roasting chickens," she answered.

"How do—how——?" he began; and the reporters wrote away, "How do—how——?"

"He is no good," said the king's daughter; "send him away." Then came thick-headed Jack, galloping, goat and all, straight into the room. "Puff! it's murdering hot," he cried.

"Yes, indeed; but I am roasting chickens," said the king's daughter.

"Oh, that's nice! then I can roast my crow," said thick-headed Jack.

"With pleasure," said the princess. "But have you anything to roast it in? I have neither pot nor pan."

"I have, though!" said thick-headed Jack. "Here is a cooking utensil with a tin handle complete." He took out the old wooden shoe and put the crow inside it.

"That is a regular meal," said the princess; "but where shall we get our soup from?"

"I've got that in my pocket," said thick-headed

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Jack. "I've got enough and to spare," and he threw some mud on the floor.

"Now, I like that," said the princess. "You have an answer ready, and you can speak. I choose you for my husband! But do you know that every word we speak and have spoken is written down, and will come out in the papers to-morrow? In every window, you see, there are three reporters and an editor. That old editor there is the worst, for he cannot understand anything." She only said that to put thick-headed Jack out of countenance; and the reporters tittered, and dropped a shower of ink-spots on the floor.

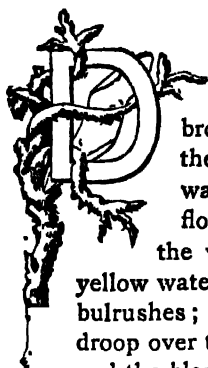
"Oh, indeed! So that is the quality," said thick-headed Jack. "Well, then, the old editor shall have the best;" and he turned out his pocket and threw the mud right in his face.

"That was neatly done," said the princess. "I could not have done that, but I shall learn in time."

Thick-headed Jack was made king. He won a wife and a crown, and sat on a throne. We have this quite wet from press in the daily papers, on the faith of the reporters and editors—and they are not to be believed for a moment.



The Bell's Hole.



ING, dong! ding, dong!" it sounds from the Bell's Hole in the Odensee brook. Every child in the old town on the island of Funen knows the brook that waters the gardens round the town and flows from the weir to the water-mill by the wooden bridge. In the brook you find yellow water-lilies, brown reeds, and tall, velvety bulrushes; old willow-trees, mossy and gnarled, droop over the brook towards the Monk's meadow and the bleaching ground on the opposite shore. The gardens on the bank lie side by side, trim and orderly as a doll's house, and planted with cabbage and other vegetables. When you see no garden, it is because some great elder-tree hangs its spreading branches between you and the shore. The current is swift, and in some places is deeper than any oar can reach. The deepest place is called the Bell's Hole; it is opposite the old nunnery, and in its depths the Nix, or river spirit, sleeps the whole day through, and rises up in the clear, starlit nights. He is very old. Grandmother says she heard of him from her grandmother; he leads a lonely life, and has no one to speak to except the old church bell. Long ago the bell hung in the belfry of St. Alban's; but now there is no trace left either of bell, belfry, or church.

"Ding, dong! ding, dong!" the bell rang out when the church was still standing: and one evening at sunset,

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when the bell was ringing its loudest, it swung itself free and flew out into the air, the white metal shining bright in the red sunlight.

"Ding, dong! ding, dong! Now I will sink to rest!" sang the bell; and it flew straight down into the Odensee brook where it runs deepest. But it found no rest nor peace. It chimes and rings down below for the Nix; you can hear it through the water, and they say its sound is a sign that some one is about to die. But that is not true; no, it rings and chimes for the old Nix, so that he may not feel so lonely.

What does the bell sing? It is very old—it stood in the belfry long before the grandmother's grandmother was born, and yet it is but a child in comparison to the Nix. He is a singular old man, silent and eccentric, with breeches of eel-skin and scaly jacket buttoned with yellow flowers. He wears a wreath of sedge on his hair, and duckweed in his beard—but he looks very well. It would take years to tell all that the bell says; she tells tales from year's end to year's end; some times tells the old ones over again, some long, some short, just as she pleases. She tells of past times—dark, cruel days they were.

"In St. Alban's church the monk climbed up the belfry tower; he was young and handsome, but more silent than all the rest. He gazed out of the loophole yonder across the Odensee brook—the bed was broad then and the Monk's meadow was a lake—he looked over the green hill up to the nunnery, where the light streamed down from the windows of the nun's cell. He knew the nun well; he remembered her, and his heart beat wildly. Ding, dong! ding, dong!"

That was what the bell sang.

"In the belfry sat the bishop's crazy servant; and

THE BELL'S HOLE.

when I, hard metal as I was, rang and swung, I could have knocked his brains out. He sat close under me and played with two pieces of stick as if they had been a lyre; he sang, 'Now I may sing aloud what I dare not whisper elsewhere; now I may sing of what is hidden behind bolt and bar. Down below it is cold and damp, and the rats prey on living men. No one knows of it—no one hears their cry! No, not when the bell rings out Ding, dong! ding, dong!'"

"A king lived then—they called him Kanute; he bowed low before bishop and monk, but when he ground down the peasants with heavy taxes and cruel laws, they took up staves and weapons and hunted him like a wild beast. He fled for sanctuary to the church, and closed gate and door behind him. The furious crowd closed round the church; I heard of it, for the crows, and rooks, and ravens, scared by the noise, flew in and out of the belfry, looked in at the church windows, and screeched aloud all that they saw. King Kanute lay praying before the altar; his brothers Eric and Benedict stood guarding him with drawn swords. But the traitor Blake betrayed his lord, the crowd outside knew where the king lay, and one of them dashed a stone through the window pane, and the king lay dead. Cries and shrieks from the mad crowd and the flying birds filled the air, and I joined in. Ding, dong! ding, dong!"

"The church bell hangs high and looks out far and wide; it sees the birds and understands their speech; the wind surges past it, and the wind knows everything. It sighs through every hole, and rift, and cranny; it hears all from the air, for the air encloses every living thing, and enters the lungs of men. All things that are spoken, by word or sigh, the air hears and tells the wind, the wind whispers the story to the bell, and the

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bell rings it aloud to the whole world. Ding, dong! ding, dong!"

"But I was weary of hearing and knowing all the heavy secrets; I grew faint, and so heavy that the beam broke, and I flew out into the sunlit air, down where the brook is deepest and the Nix lives all alone. Here I tell over all I know from year's end to year's end. Ding, dong! ding, dong!"

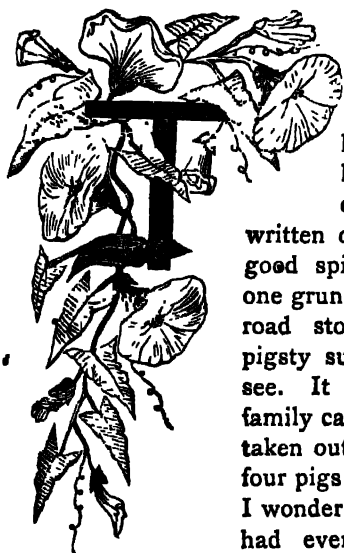
That is what the bell rings out from the Bell's Hole; the grandmother says so.

But the schoolmaster says there is no bell ringing down in the brook, because a bell cannot ring under water. And there is no Nix in the Bell's Hole, because there are no such things as Nixies. And when the church bells are ringing beautifully, he says bells cannot ring at all—it is the air which vibrates and conveys the sound, and, if you remember, the grandmother said that the bell said that too. So they are agreed in one thing, and so much is certain. "Take heed, take heed, and watch thy heart!" Both of them say that.

The air knows all things. It is round us and in us; it speaks of our thoughts and deeds; its voice echoes longer than the bell's in the Odensee brook where the Nix lives. It sounds far out into the courts of heaven for ever and for ever, till the heavenly bells ring out, "Ding, dong! ding, dong!"



The Pigs.



HE blessed St. Anthony has taken the pigs under his protection ; and in later days Charles Dickens has written of a pig, so that we feel in good spirits even if we only hear one grunt. Close to the turnpike-road stood a peasant's pigsty, a pigsty such as one does not often see. It was made out of an old family carriage ; the seats had been taken out, the wheels removed, and four pigs had been shut up inside. I wonder if they were the first that had ever been there ? However that may be, it was a regular family carriage, the rag of morocco leather proved that as it dangled from the roof. Everything spoke of better days. " Grunt ! grunt ! " said the pigs, and the carriage sighed and creaked. It was a sad end to come to ! " The beautiful is fled ! " it sighed—or at least it might have done.

It was autumn. The coach was empty ; the pigs were wandering about the forest like gentlemen at ease. The leaves had fallen from the trees, for the wind and rain gave them no rest or breathing time till they were hunted to the ground. The birds of passage were gone

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—"The beautiful is fled! Where is the lovely green-wood, the sunshine, and the song of birds?" That was the sigh which came from the leafless trees and the heart of the wild-rose bush. It was the king of the roses who sighed. Do you know him? He is all beard; the finest red-green beard; you can easily find him. Go to the wild-rose hedge in the autumn when all the flowers have died and nothing is left but the scarlet hips; among them you will see a red-green, mossy flower, that is the king of the roses; a little green leaf rises out of his skull, that is his plume; he is the only man of his kind on the whole rose hedge, and he it was who sighed.

"The beautiful is fled! The roses are over—the leaves fall fast. It is wet and cold! The birds are silent; the pigs wander alone in search of acorns—they are the masters of the wood."

The nights were cold and the days sunless, but the raven sat on the post and cawed. Ravens and crows have large families; they all cawed merrily, and the crowd is always right.

Under the tall trees in the dip of the forest path is a large puddle, and there lay the pigs, large and small together. They thought the place was inexpressibly beautiful. "*Oui!*" they cried—it was all the French they knew, but still it was something. They were so clean and so fat!

The old ones lay still and thought deeply; the young ones, on the contrary, never lost a moment. One little sucking-pig had a curly tail, and that tail was the pride of his mother's heart. She thought every one was looking at it; but she was mistaken, they were all thinking of themselves and of all the profit which they could get out of the wood. They had always

THE PIGS.

heard that the acorns which they ate grew at the roots of the trees, and so they rooted up the earth to find them ; but up came a young pig—it is always the young ones who make discoveries—and he maintained that the acorns fell from the branches, he said one had fallen on his own head, and that had first suggested the idea to him ; since then he had watched, and he was now sure of his case. The old pigs laid their heads together and grunted, “ The best is gone. It went with the birds’ twitter. We want some fruits. Whatever can be eaten is good, and we eat it.”

“ *Oui, oui, oui !* ” they all cried.

But the mother looked at her little sucking-pig with the curly tail. “ One must not forget the beautiful,” she said.

“ Caw! caw! ” said the crow, and flew down from the tree to be appointed nightingale. ‘ There must be a nightingale, and she was immediately appointed.

“ Fled! fled! ” cried the king of the roses. “ The beautiful is fled.” It was rough, and cold, and stormy ; the rain dashed through the wood and over the field in grey, cloudy lines.

“ Where is the bird who sang there ? where are the field flowers and the sweet berries in the wood ? Lost ! lost ! ”

A light gleamed out starlike from the forester’s hut ; its long ray darted through the trees. A hymn sounded from within, little children stood round their grandfather’s chair. The old man sat with his Bible on his knee, and read to them of God, and His eternal Life, of the springtide and the resurrection, the trees that would bloom again, the roses which would return with the nightingales, of the beautiful which should be lord once more.

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But the king of the roses did not hear ; he sat out in the wind and rain and sighed, " Lost ! lost ! " The pigs were lords of the forest, and the mother looked at her little pig with its curly tail, and said, " There is still some one left who has an eye for the beautiful ! "

At the Almshouse Window.



EAR to the grass-grown rampart walls which run round Copenhagen stands a large red house. Balsams and musk are seen growing behind all the long rows of windows ; the house looks rather poverty-stricken, and the people who live there are all of them old and poor. It is the Warton Almshouse.

At the window stands an old maid, picking the faded leaves from her balsam plant, and watching the children playing on the grassy ramparts. Of what is she thinking ? A whole life drama unrolls itself before her eyes.

How happy the children are ! How they sport and gambol ! What rosy cheeks and merry blue eyes they have ! but there is a lack of shoes and stockings. They are dancing over the very spot where, as the saga tells, the earth sank down, hundreds of years ago, and an innocent child was enticed by playthings, flowers, and sweetmeats into the open grave, which was then filled up above the happy, laughing, trustful little one. From that time the earth has never sunk again, it

AT THE ALMSHOUSE WINDOW.

stands firm and high, and the grass and flowers grow over it. The children at their play know nothing of the story, or they would hear the murdered child sobbing beneath their feet, and see her tears in the dew upon the grass. They know nothing either of the Danish king, who here, in the presence of the besiegers, swore to his trembling courtiers that he would abide with his



burghers and die in his own nest; nothing of the brave men, or of the women who poured down boiling water on the enemy.

Play on, little maiden—the years speed by—the happy years! The newly-confirmed walk hand-in-hand upon the rampart walls. You wear a white dress; it is made out of an old one, but it has cost your mother many a sigh:

ANDERSEN'S TALES.

and if your scarlet shawl hangs down too low, so much the better, one can see how beautiful it is! You are thinking of God's goodness and of your new dress : yes, it is beautiful on the rampart wall !

The years pass on and bring sad and sunny days. Your youthful heart has led you to a friend, you know not how. How many times he and you wander along the grassy slopes ! in the early springtide, on fast and festival days, when the church bells ring out an *Ave* to the coming spring.

The first violets are scarcely out yet, but yonder on the ramparts, just opposite Rosenberg Castle, grows a tree with its new tender buds.

Yearly it puts forth its green leaves—but the human heart blooms only once. Dark clouds like those in the dim northern sky hover above the heart of man. Poor child ! your lover's wedding chamber was his coffin, and you—the old maid—look out from behind the balsam plant in the almshouse window to the merry children at their play, and see your own story repeated as in a dream.

That is the life drama which the old woman sees from the window, as she looks at the rosy-cheeked children, shoeless and stockingless, but free and happy as the birds of the air.



The Golden Treasure.



HE drummer's wife went into the church ; she looked at the new altar with its painted picture and carved angels ; they were equally beautiful, those on the canvas and those carved in wood and then painted and gilded. Their hair shone like sunshine, but God's sunshine was the loveliest ; it shone clearer and more golden still when the sun went

down behind the trees.

She looked up to the sun, and thought of the little baby which the stork was going to bring her soon ; she was very happy, and she looked and looked, and wished that the child might catch some of the sunshine, or at least might look as beautiful as the angels on the altar.

And when she really held the child in her arms and lifted it up to its father, it looked like one of the angels in the church, its hair shone like gold, it had caught the glory of the setting sun.

" My treasure, my sunshine !" cried the mother. She kissed the bright curls, and the drummer's room was filled with joy and life and gladness. The drummer beat a roll of triumph. The drum beat—the big drum beat, " Red hair ! The baby has red hair ! Believe the drumskin and not what your mother says. Rat-a-plan !

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rat-a-plan!" And the town repeated what the big drum said.

The boy was taken to church and baptized. There is not much to be said about his name: it was Peter. The whole town and the drum named him Peter, the drummer's boy with red hair; but his mother kissed his red hair and called him her sunshine, her golden treasure.

In the soft clay walls of the narrow pass near the drummer's house many of the villagers used to write their names as a token. "Fame and glory—there's something in that!" cried the drummer, and he cut his name and his little son's among the rest.

The swallows came home. In their long wanderings they had seen more lasting inscriptions on the cliffs, and on the temple walls in Hindostan; great deeds of, mighty queens, immortal names, so very old that no one could read them.

Fame! Glory!

The swallows built in the narrow pass: they bored holes in the walls, the rain crumbled and washed away the names, even those of the drummer and his little son.

"Peter's name will perhaps stay there for a year and a half," said his father.

"Fool!" thought the big drum; but it only said, "Rub-a-dub-dub!"

He grew to be a merry boy, full of life and spirit, this drummer's boy with the red hair. He had a sweet, clear voice, and could sing like the birds in the wood. It was no tune and yet all tune.

"He must go into the choir," said his mother; "and stand up in the church among the bright-haired angels who are so like him!"

THE GOLDEN TREASURE.

"Carrots!" shouted the street boys after him. The big drum heard that from the neighbours.

"Don't go home, Peter," cried the boys; "if you sleep in the garret the thatch will take fire, and then the big drum will have to be beat."

"You keep out of the way of the drum-sticks," said Peter; and, little as he was, he ran boldly up to the nearest boy and gave him such a blow that his heels flew up and his head fell down. The others took themselves off as fast as they could.

The organist of the place was a very grand person: he was the son of the silver cleaner to the imperial court. He was very fond of Peter, and from time to time he took him home and gave him a few lessons on the violin. The boy seemed to have the music at his finger's ends; he wanted to play more than the drum—he wanted to be an organist.

"I shall be a soldier," said Peter; for he was quite a little lad, and it seemed to him the finest thing in the world to march about with a gun on one's shoulder, "Right, left! Right, left!" and to wear a uniform and have a sword.

"Learn to love the sound of the drumskin; rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub!" said the drum.

"Yes; if he can march on till he becomes a general," said his father; "but if he is to do that, we must have a war."

"God forbid!" cried his mother.

"We have nothing to lose," said the drummer.

"We have the lad," she answered.

"But if he comes back to us a general?" said the father.

"With no arms and legs," said the mother. "No, I would rather keep my golden treasure whole and safe."

ANDERSEN'S TALES.

"Rat-a-plan, rat-a-plan!" went the big drum, and all the drums throughout the land.

The war had come. The soldiers marched off and the drummer-boy followed them. His mother wept; his father dreamed of him crowned with glory; the organist said he ought to have stayed at home and learned music.

"Carrots!" cried the soldiers; and Peter laughed. But some of them said, "Red fox," and then he bit his lips and looked straight before him—the hard words could not hurt him.

The boy was smart and ready, and good-humoured too. "Good-humour is the best brandy-flask," said the old veterans.

For many a night in rain and storm the boy lay wet to the skin under the open sky; but his pluck never left him. "Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub! Forward, march!" he beat upon his drum. He was certainly born to be a drummer.

The day of battle came. It was early dawn, the sun had not yet risen; the air was cold, the battle hot. There was more powder-smoke than mist in the morning air. Balls and shells whizzed over and through the soldiers' heads, but on they went. One after another sank down, with blood-stained forehead and face as white as chalk. The little drummer-boy kept his rosy cheeks, and took no harm; he smiled at the dog of the regiment, as he sprang round him, and snapped at the balls as if they only came to play with him.

"March, forward, march!" That was the word of command for the drum; and the words did not mean "go back;" but people must go back sometimes, if they have common sense, and now the word was given, "Retreat." But the little drummer-boy beat, "March,

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forward, march!" That was the way he understood the command; and the soldiers followed the drum. That was a famous rappel, and it led the faltering troops to victory.

Life and limb was trampled down on the battlefield. Shells tore the quivering flesh and kindled into flame the thatched roofs under which the wounded had sought shelter—to lie forgotten perhaps for an hour, perhaps for ever.

It is of no use to think of it, but one does think of it all the same, even far away in the peaceful town. The drummer and his wife thought of it, for Peter was in the war.

"I am getting tired of all this grumbling," said the big drum.

Another day of battle came; in the early morning this time also; the father and mother lay asleep, they had been talking of their son; they spoke of him every night, and said he was in God's hand. The father dreamed that the war was over, and that Peter had come home with a silver cross on his breast. The mother dreamed that she was in church, looking at the painted pictures and the carved angels with their golden hair, and that her own dear boy, her golden treasure, was standing among the angels, robed in white and singing as only angels can sing. He smiled at her and rose up with the angels through the sunshine.

"My golden treasure!" she cried, as she woke; "the Lord has taken him to Himself!" She wrung her hands, buried her head in the pillow and wept.

"Where does he rest? In the great, common grave, among his comrades, or under the waters of the marsh? No one knows his grave, no holy words have been read over it."

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The "Our Father" fell dumbly from her lips; she was tired and heart-broken; and she fell asleep.

Days passed on, in life as in dreams.

It was evening; a rainbow spanned the sky, it touched the forest and the deep marsh.

They say, and the people believe it too, that wherever the rainbow touches the earth a treasure lies buried—and a golden treasure lay buried there. No one thought of him but his mother, and so she dreamed of him all the more.

The days passed on, in life as in dreams.

Not a hair of his head was hurt, not a golden hair.

"Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, here he comes!" That was what the drum ought to have beat; and his mother would have sung it if she had dreamed it.

Crowned with victory and shouting "Hurrah!" came the soldiers homeward. The war was over; peace was signed.

The dog of the regiment sprang and leaped round the men, to make the way three times as long as it was.

Weeks passed away, and Peter walked into his mother's room. He was as brown as an Indian, his eyes were bright, his face radiant. His mother held him in her arms, she kissed his lips, his eyes, his red hair. She had her boy again; there was no silver cross on his breast as his father had dreamed, but he had all his limbs, which his mother had *not* dreamed.

How happy they were! They laughed and cried; and Peter hugged the big drum.

"There stands the old mawkin!" he cried.

And his father beat a tattoo of ecstasy.

"It seems like a conflagration," said the big drum;

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"clear daylight, warm hearts, golden treasure—rub-a-dub!"

And then? Yes, what then? Ask the organist.

"Peter is outgrowing the drum," he said; "he will be cleverer than his master." And yet the organist was the son of the silver cleaner to the imperial court; but what had taken him half a lifetime to learn Peter learned in six months.

There was something in the boy so bright and so true-hearted. His eyes shone—and his hair shone too, there was no denying that.

"He ought to dye his hair," said the young women; "the inspector's daughter dyed hers beautifully—and then she was very soon engaged."

"And afterwards it went as green as duckweed, and wants dyeing every month!"

"She manages it though, and so could Peter. He is received in the best houses; even in the mayor's family; he gives Miss Lotty music lessons."

How he did play! The loveliest pieces, which had never been noted down on paper. He played in clear nights and starless nights as well. "It was intolerable," said the next-door neighbour and the big drum.

He played till his thoughts rose up and made pictures of the future. Fame! Glory!

Miss Lotty sat at the piano; her delicate fingers wandered over the keys and the notes echoed deep in Peter's heart. It seemed to be too much for him to bear; and that was not once, but many times. At last he seized the fair white hand, kissed it, and looked into the girl's brown eyes. Heaven alone knows for certain what he said to her, but we are allowed to guess. Lotty coloured

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all over her neck and shoulders, but did not say a word ; visitors came into the room, and among them was the councillor's son ; he had a high white forehead and carried his head thrown back proudly. Peter sat at Lotty's side, and she looked at him with gentle eyes.

At home that night he spoke about the great world, and the golden treasure hidden for him in his violin.

Glory ! Fame !

"Rub-a-dub ! rub-a-dub !" cried the big drum. "Peter is gone mad. I believe the house is on fire."

The next day his mother went to market.

"Do you know the news, Peter ?" she said, when she came home ; "a fine piece of news. Miss Lotty is engaged to the councillor's son. It happened last night."

"No !" said Peter, springing from his chair. But his mother said "yes." She had heard it from the barber's wife, and the barber had heard it from the mayor himself.

Peter turned as white as a corpse, and sat down.

"What is it ?" cried his mother in terror.

"Nothing ! Leave me in peace," he cried ; and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"My darling—my golden treasure !" cried his mother, weeping too. But the big drum said—

"Lotty is dead ! Lotty is dead ! The song is ended."

But the song was not ended : there were many verses yet to come, and those were the best of all—the golden treasure of a life.

"She makes herself quite ridiculous," cried the neighbours. "Everybody must read the letters she receives from her 'golden treasure,' and listen to what the newspapers say of him and his fiddle. I daresay she finds the money he sends her useful, now she is a widow."

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"He plays before emperors and kings," said the organist. "Such a fate has not been granted to me; but he does not forget his old master."

"His poor father dreamed that he came home with a silver cross on his breast. He has won his knight's cross now, and in a more difficult way. If his father had only lived to see it!"

"Fame!" cried the big drum; and his native town said so too. "The little drummer's boy, red-haired Peter, who used to run about with wooden shoes and play for the village dances, is become famous."

"He played for us before he played to the queen," said the mayor's wife. "He was mad about our Lotty at that time: he always looked too high; he was a dreamy, conceited young man; my husband laughed heartily when he heard of the affair. Lotty is now the wife of a councillor."

But there was a golden treasure buried in the heart of the bright-haired child, who when he was a lad had rallied the wavering troops to victory with his "March—forward—march!" The golden treasure of harmony lay in his violin, it swelled out like an organ, it quivered as if all the midsummer fairies were dancing on the strings; one heard the clear song of the thrush and the passionate human voice of men; rapture thrilled all hearts, and Peter's fame filled all the land. It was a conflagration—with flames of enthusiasm.

"He is very handsome," cried all the young ladies, and the old ones too: the very oldest of all bought an album to receive the locks of hair of distinguished people; she bought it on purpose that she might beg a lock of Peter's thick, golden curls.

He came into the drummer's lowly room as radiant as a prince, happier than a king. His eyes and face

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were like the sunshine. He held his mother in his arms ; she kissed him and wept for joy, while he nodded a greeting to every well-known object round him. There was the old cupboard with the tea-cups and glasses, and the settle by the fire where he had so often slept as a child. As to the big drum, he brought it out into the middle of the room and said to his mother, " My poor father would have beat a tattoo to-day. I must do it now ! "

And he thundered down upon the drum in a perfect hurricane : and the drum was so elated by the honour that it split.

" He has a pretty touch," said the drum ; " and he has given me something to remember him by. I shall wait now till his mother bursts, too, with pride in her golden treasure."

That is the story of the Golden Treasure.

Good Deeds are not Forgotten.



N old castle stood surrounded by its walls and moat ; the drawbridge was seldom lowered, for there were many unwelcome guests round about. Below the eaves of the roof were loopholes, through which one could send down on the enemy showers of bullets, boiling water, or molten lead. The rooms within were lofty, and that was just as well, for the

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clouds of smoke from the fire on the hearth rose up to the ceiling and curled round the great, knotted beams of wood. On the walls hung pictures of knights in armour, and richly-dressed ladies; the most queenly of them all walked through the castle halls as mistress and chatelaine. Her name was Meta Mogens, and the castle was her own.

One evening a band of robbers came to the castle. They slew three of the servants and the great mastiff in the courtyard. Then they bound Meta Mogens with the dog's chain, and tied her to the kennel, while they rioted in the hall and made free with the wine and beer from the cellar.

The Lady Meta was bound fast by the dog's chain; she could not even bark.

But look! One of the robber's servant lads comes stealing towards her, holds his very breath lest he should be discovered and shot dead.

"Lady Meta Mogens," said the lad, "do you remember how my father, when your lord was still living, was forced to ride the wooden horse? You interceded for him, but it was of no avail. He was sentenced to ride till his limbs were racked and numb. But you stole out to him, as I now steal out to you, and pushed a stone under each of his feet, so that he could rest upon them. No one saw the deed—or at least they pretended not to see it, for you were their young duchess, the lady of the castle. My father told me the tale himself, and I have not forgotten. Now I am come to set you free, Lady Meta Mogens."

Then they took two horses from the stables and galloped away through rain and storm to seek for help.

"You have richly repaid the little help I gave to your old father," said Meta Mogens.

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"Good deeds are not forgotten," said the lad.
The robbers were put to death.

There was once an old castle ; it is standing yet. It is not the home of Lady Meta Mogens, but of another noble family.

We are in our own days now. The sun shines on the gilded turrets ; little wooded islands lie like bouquets upon the moat, and the wild swans circle round them. The garden is full of roses, but the fairest flower is the lady of the castle ; she is radiant with happiness—the joy of good deeds. Their memory does not live in the world without ; it is cherished deeply in grateful hearts, the safest place of all, for there good deeds are not forgotten.

The lady leaves the castle for the peasant's hut in the fields, where the poor lame girl lives. The low window looks towards the north, the sun never falls upon the room, and the child can see nothing but a scrap of ploughed field shut in by high palings. Suddenly the sunlight bursts into the room and fills it from end to end ; the warm, golden sunlight from heaven. It pours in through the large new window that looks southward through what was before a dead, bare wall.

The cripple sits in the warm light, and looks out on forest and lake. The world has grown so large for her, so grand and beautiful, and all through one word from the gentle mistress of the castle.

"The word was so easy, the deed so insignificant," she said ; "and the joy it gave was so unspeakably great and full of blessing."

And she continues to work good deeds ; she thinks of all in the houses of the poor, and of those who

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suffer in the houses of the rich. The deeds lie hidden and unnoticed, but God remembers them.

Good-deeds are not forgotten.

An old house stood in the centre of the busy town. It had halls and lofty rooms, but we have no business there; we will stay in the kitchen. It is warm and bright, clean and tidy. The dishcovers are as bright as silver, the tables white as curd, the dresser as clean as hands can make it. All this order and cleanliness is the work of a servant girl, and, besides that, she has found time to dress herself as if she were going to church. She wears a bow on her cap—a black bow, in sign of mourning; and yet she has no one to mourn for; neither father nor mother, kinsman nor sweetheart. She is but a poor, hard-working girl. She was engaged long ago to a youth as poor as herself. One day he came to her and said, "We two have not a penny between us; the rich widow up the street has spoken to me. She could make me a rich man, but you have my heart. What shall I do?"

"Do what you think will make you happy," said the girl. "Be kind and faithful to her, but understand this—from the moment we part, we must never meet again.

Years passed away. One day she met her former lover face to face in the street. He looked white and wretched, and she could not help stopping to speak to him. "How are you going on?" she said.

"Well and prosperously in every respect," he answered. "My wife is true and good, but you have my heart. I have prayed and struggled, and the battle will soon be over. We shall not meet again till we meet in heaven."

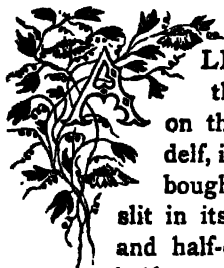
A week passed away; and this morning there was a

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notice of his death in the papers. That is why the girl wears her black bow. He is dead, and has left a widow and three stepchildren, the paper says. The black bow is a sign of mourning, and the girl's face is a still sadder sign. She keeps her love and sorrow in her heart—where love is not forgotten.

There you have the three stories, three leaves on one stem. Will you have more? There are plenty of such trefoil plants in the heart—all unforgotten.

The Money Box.



ALL the playthings were lying about in the nursery, and the money box stood on the chest of drawers. It was made of delf, in the shape of a pig, and had been bought at the china shop. There was a slit in its back large enough to hold shillings and half-crowns, and there were one or two half-crowns inside it, besides a whole heap of coppers. Indeed, the money pig was so choke-full, that it could not rattle, and that is the highest point of perfection to which a money pig can attain. There it stood, high and mighty, on the chest of drawers, and looked down on everything else in the room. It knew very well that there was enough inside it to buy up the whole lot—and that is what is meant by having a consciousness of one's own worth.

The other playthings thought as it did; but they did

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not mention it, there were so many other things to talk about.

One of the drawers stood open, and in it sat a large doll; she was beautiful, but rather old, you saw that by the patch on her neck.

"Let us play at men and women," she said; "that



is the best game." Immediately everything began to be astir, even the framed pictures on the walls turned round and showed that they had a wrong side, not that they meant to object to the game in the least.

It was late at night; the moon shone in at the windows, so the playthings got their light cheap. The

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game was agreed upon, and every one was asked to take a part, even the children's go-cart, though that was reckoned among the very commonest playthings:

"Every one has his own place," said the cart; "we cannot all be noblemen, there must be some to do the work, as people say."

The money pig was the only one who received a written invitation; it was taken for granted that he would not come without. As it was, he did not send an answer, or say whether or no he would come; and he did *not* come; he said that if he was to take any part in it, he must be able to see everything from his own house, and they could arrange accordingly.

All the playthings agreed at once, and set up the doll's theatre just in front of the pig, so that he could see everything with no trouble. They were to begin with a comedy, and afterwards to drink tea and open a debating society. They began, however, with the last first: the rocking-horse spoke of training and pure breeding; the go-cart of railways and the properties of steam, it was all in their line, and they had a right to speak on such matters. The time-piece talked about politics—tic, tac—he knew the time of day; but it was secretly whispered that he was not correct. The cane stood up stiff and proud, thinking of his brass ferrule and silver knob; and on the sofa lay two cushions, pretty but stupid.

Now the play began. Every one sat and looked on, and they were asked to crack and clap and stamp when they were pleased. The riding-whip said he certainly should not crack for old people, but only for young ladies. "I will crack for everybody," said the pop-gun. The play was not very good, but it was capitally played. All the actors turned their painted side to the

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public, for they were never meant to be seen from the wrong side. They acted famously, right out in front of the footlights, for their wires were rather too long, but then they could be seen all the better for that.

The patched doll was so completely carried away that the place in her neck broke out again from sheer excitement; and the money pig was so pleased that he made up his mind to do something for one of the



artists; and he decided on mentioning one of them in his will and leaving him permission to be buried in the pig's family vault—when the proper time came.

It was a very good thing that they had given up the tea-party and held the debating society instead: that was really just like men and women; and there was no harm in it, for they were only playing, and every one was thinking either of himself or of what the money pig was thinking about. The money pig thought the

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longest, for it was thinking of its will and of its funeral. And when did that come to pass? why, a great deal sooner than any one expected. Bang! down it fell from the chest of drawers on to the floor and broke all to pieces; the coppers hopped and danced about till it was a pleasure to see them; the smallest spun round like a top, and the large ones rolled all over the room, especially one half-crown who had always wanted to go out into the world.

And it did go out into the world, and so did they all. The pieces of the money pig were thrown into the sweepings and a new pig stood on the chest of drawers. It had not a farthing inside it yet, so that it could not rattle and in that respect it was like the other, which was a good beginning for it—and it shall be an ending for us.

The Toad.



HE well was deep, so the rope was long. The windlass moved heavily when one drew up the full bucket to the surface. Clear as the water was, the sun could never see its face reflected in it; for it could not reach so far. However far it went it saw only stones with wet, green moss between them.

Down in the well lived a family of toads; the old

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mother, who was still alive, had in the first instance tumbled down head-over-heels into the well. The green frogs, who had lived there a long while acknowledged their relationship to the new-comers, and called them excursionists to the watering-place. But the excursionists seemed inclined to stay; they lived very comfortably on the dry land, as they called the wet stones.

The mother toad had travelled in her youth. She had lain in the bucket when it was drawn up; but it was too light for her; luckily she managed to get out, and she fell back with a frightful splash into the water, and lay for three days in bed with a pain in her back. She could not tell very much about the world above, but she knew one thing—they all knew that—that the well was not the whole world. The mother toad might indeed have told all manner of stories, but she never answered when she was questioned, so they left off questioning her.

"She is squat, fat, and ugly," said the young green frogs; "and her young ones will be just as ugly too."

"That may be," said the mother toad; "but one of them will have a jewel in its head, as I have one."

The green frogs listened and croaked; they did not like that, so they made grimaces and dived under water. But the young toads stretched out their hind-legs for very pride; each of them thought he had the jewel and held his head very still. At last they asked their mother what they were all so proud about, and what a jewel was.

"It is something so glorious and splendid that I cannot describe it," said the mother toad. "It is something which one carries about to one's own delight and to the mortification of everybody else. But ask no questions, for I never answer them."

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"I have not got the jewel," said the youngest toad. She was as ugly as a toad could be. "Why should I have such a beautiful thing? And if it vexes everybody else, I should not like it. No; all I wish is, that I could get up to the top of the well and look about. It must be beautiful up there."

"Better stay where you are," said her mother. "Here you know the place, and what belongs to you. Beware of the bucket; it might squeeze you flat; and even if you got safe inside, you would very likely fall out, and it is not every one who can fall as luckily as I did, with whole limbs, and not an egg broken."

"Croak!" said the little toad; it was just as if we said "alas!"

She wanted very much to get up to the top of the well and look out; she felt a longing for the sunlight and the greenery; and when, the next morning, the bucket as it was being drawn up happened to stop for a moment before her stone, a thrill passed through the little creature and she sprang into the bucket, which was immediately drawn up and emptied.

"Pah! look at that," said the boy who emptied the bucket, as he saw the toad. "I never saw such an ugly thing in my life." And he tried to crush the toad under his heavy boot, but the little thing hopped in among the nettles which grew round the mouth of the well. Here she saw stem stand close to stem, and when she looked up and saw the sun shine on the green, transparent leaves, she felt as we do when we suddenly enter a lofty wood and see the sunlight falling through the leaves.

"It is much prettier here than in the well," said the young toad. "I could gladly stay here all my life." And she really did stay there nearly two hours. "I wonder what is outside! Now I am come so far I must

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try to go farther." She moved as quickly as she could into the turnpike road, where the sun shone on her and the dust sprinkled her with powder. "One is certainly on dry land here," said the young toad. "It is almost too much of a good thing. It fidgets me."

She reached the ditch where the forget-me-nots grew under a hedge of white hawthorn. An elder tree stood close to, and there was bind-weed and some pink flowers. A butterfly flew by the hedge; the toad thought it was a flower which had got loose so that it could look about the world better. "It is only natural," thought the toad.

"If I could but fly like that!" said the toad. "Croak! Ah, what beautiful things!"

She stayed for a week in the ditch and had plenty to eat and drink. On the next day she said to herself, "Come, march! forward!" And yet what could she find better or prettier? Perhaps a little toad or a green frog: she had felt last night as if some friends were near.

"How beautiful it is to live! To come out of the well to the green nettles, and to crawl over the dusty road! But, forward! let me try to find a little toad or a frog, for it is not good to be always alone. Nature is not sufficient."

And she continued her wanderings.

She came to a large pond in a field; the sedge grew all round it and the toad splashed into the water.

"It will most likely be too wet for you here," said the frogs; "but you are very welcome. Are you a he or a she? Not that it matters. You are welcome all the same."

In the evening she was invited to the family concert—great enthusiasm and weak voices—we all know that. For refreshments, there was the whole pond to drink.

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"I'm going on farther now," said the little toad; she felt impelled to seek for something better.

She saw the stars shine bright and clear, saw the new moon come out, and the sun rise higher and higher.

"I am still in the well," she cried; "it is larger, but it is a well. I must rise higher. I feel a restless longing."

And when the moon was round and full she said to herself, "I wonder whether that is the bucket which is let down, and into which I must spring if I am ever to attain to anything higher? Or is the sun the great bucket? How large it is! How it shines! It could hold us all. I must take care not to lose my opportunity. Oh, how something gleams in my head! The jewel itself could not shine brighter. But I have no jewel, and I don't fret for the loss of it. No; I would rise higher: I feel confident, and yet afraid. It is hard work, but it must be done. Come, forward! Keep straight on!"

She crawled along as fast as a toad can, and came to a road-side by some houses; here were both flower and kitchen gardens. She rested for awhile in the kitchen garden. "How many different kinds of things there are of which I never heard!" she cried. "How large and beautiful the world is! But one must not sit still in one place," and she hopped in among the cabbages. "How green it is here! how beautiful!"

"I know that already," said the caterpillar on the leaf. "My leaf is the largest here. It covers the whole world. But I can live without it."

"Cluck! cluck! cluck!" In came the fowls running all over the garden. The hen who led the way was very far-sighted; she saw the caterpillar and pecked at it so that it fell to the ground and lay there twisting

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and twirling about. The hen looked at it first with one eye and then with the other; she did not know what to make of the twisting and twirling.

"She means no good by it," said the hen, and darted forward to eat her up. The toad was so horrified that she crawled straight up to the hen.

"Oh, it has friends to back it!" cried the hen. "Look at the crawling thing!" and she turned away. "I don't want the nasty green morsel," she said; "it would only stick in my throat."

The other hens were of the same opinion, and they turned away. "I got away from them," said the caterpillar; "it is a good thing to have such presence of mind as I have. But the most difficult thing yet remains to be done, and that is to get back on to my cabbage leaf. Now, where is it?"

The little toad came up to offer her sympathy. She was glad that her ugliness had frightened the hens away.

"What do you mean by that?" said the caterpillar. "I got away myself. You are extremely ugly to look at. May I beg to be left alone in my own property? Now I smell cabbage. This must be my leaf. There is nothing like property. But I must climb up higher."

"Yes; higher!" echoed the little toad; "higher! She feels just as I do. But she is not in good spirits to-day: she has been frightened. We all want to rise higher." And she raised herself as high as she could.

The stork was sitting in his nest on the roof of the farm-house: he flapped, and the mother stork flapped too.

"How high up they live!" thought the toad. "Whoever could get up there?"

In the farm-house there lived two young students;

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the one was a poet and the other a naturalist. The one sang joyously of all that God had created, and how it was mirrored in his own heart; he sang it out clear and strong in tuneful verses; the other took hold of the thing itself, and cut it up, if need be. He looked on God's creation as a great arithmetical problem; subtracted and multiplied; tried to learn it by heart, and speak reasonably about everything; he was all reason, and he spoke very sensibly. They were good, light-hearted people, both of them.

"There's a fine specimen of a toad! I must have that in spirits," said the naturalist.

"Why, you have two already," said the poet; "let it enjoy its life in peace."

"But how frightfully hideous it is!" said the other.

"If we could only find the jewel in its head, I would stand by while you dissected it."

"Jewel!" cried the naturalist. "You don't seem to know much about natural history."

"But is there not something very beautiful in the popular belief that the toad, the ugliest of all animals, has a precious jewel in its head? Is it not so with men? What a jewel Æsop had! and then Socrates——"

The toad heard no more; she had not understood half of it. The students went on their way, and the toad escaped being put in spirits for one while at least.

"They were speaking of the jewel," she said. "What a good thing that I have not got it! I might have met with great unpleasantness."

A sound was heard from the roof of the farmhouse. The father stork was reading a lecture to his family; and all he said was aimed at the two men in the garden below.

"Mankind is a conceited species," said the stork.

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"Listen how their tongues go, and yet they cannot even cluck! They plume themselves on their fluent speech! And such a language as it is! They have only to go a day's journey and no one can understand them. Now, our language is spoken all over the world; in the far north and in Egypt too. And they cannot even fly! They dart about in a machine they call a railway, and as often as not they break their neck. It makes my beak run cold only to think of it! The world can go on without men. We can do without them. If we can only get frogs and worms!"

"That was a long speech," cried the toad. "What a great man he is, and how high up he sits! I never saw any one sit so high. And how he swims!" she added, as she saw him fly through the air.

The mother stork sat still in her nest and talked to her young ones about Egypt and the waters of the Nile, and of the incomparable mud of that distant land. It all sounded very new and fascinating to the little toad.

"I must go to Egypt," she said. "If the stork or one of his young ones would but take me with them! I would oblige him in everything I could. Yes, I must go to Egypt. I am so happy. All the joy and longing that I feel is better than having a jewel in my head."

And all the time she *had* the jewel! The deathless longing for better things.

Suddenly the stork flew downwards; he had seen the toad in the grass, and he seized it roughly. His beak squeezed her, the wind rushed past them, but upwards they rose—on towards Egypt, she knew that; and her eyes sent out sparks of fire.

"Croak! ah!"

The body was dead, the toad was killed. But what became of the sparks of fire?

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The sunbeam caught them, and the jewel from the toad's head, and carried them—whither?

Do not ask the naturalist; ask the poet. He will make a fairy tale of it for you, and the storks and the caterpillar will be in it. Only think: the caterpillar will turn into a beautiful butterfly. The storks will fly across the sea to Africa, and come back, the very same way, to the same country, the same roof! That sounds *too* wild and improbable, does it not? But you may ask even the naturalist; he will be obliged to confess that it is true. Indeed, you must have seen it yourself.

“But the jewel in the toad's head?”

Look for it in the sun; and try to find it.

The light is too strong. Our eyes cannot bear it yet. We cannot gaze upon the splendour round us, but God will give us power enough to do so some day. That will be the finest fairy tale of all, and we shall all be in it.



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